MY LIFE AMONG THE BLUE-JACKETS

AGNES WESTON

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MY LIFE AMONG THE BLUEJACKETS

Agnes Webster

MY LIFE AMONG THE BLUEJACKETS

BY

AGNES WESTON

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DEDICATED

TO THE

OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE

OLD AND NEW NAVY

WHOSE

FRIENDSHIP I VALUE

FOREWORD

THE ANCHOR WATCH

On board our ships there is a watch called "the anchor watch"—the ship is lying at her moorings, and there is not much to guard against, but, all alert, the men are at their posts; still there is a certain amount of leisure, and many a life story is told and many a yarn is spun during those quiet hours.

I have been asked to write the story of my life, but how to do it amidst a whirl of work I did not know, and whether if written it would do any good I could not be sure; however, I am taking advantage of a short "anchor watch" to put down a few recollections, and if they interest and stir up any person to work for God's glory, and for the good of others, I shall be amply repaid.

AGNES WESTON.

Royal Sailors' Rest,
Portsmouth.

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MY LIFE AMONG THE BLUEJACKETS

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD

"Home, home, sweet, sweet home."

I HAVE seen tears run down rough and bronzed faces at our Sailor's Rest when the familiar strain of "Home, sweet home" has been played or sung; it touches a sacred chord in every heart, as it does in mine, as I think of my early home, and the dear ones whose love encircled me there.

When I first saw the light I do not pretend to remember, but the place was the metropolis of the British Empire, and our late beloved Queen Victoria was not only on the throne but had commenced her happy married life.

I have always been thankful that the greater part of my life was lived during the reign of Victoria the Good, and that she took a personal interest in the work that God called me to do among her British bluejackets. It may seem to some that I ought to have been born within sound of the boatswain's

whistle, and of the morning and evening gun, but it was not so. Dear, smoky old London was my birthplace on March 26, 1840. A lingering affection for it has run through my life, and is strong now, although my sun is "swinging towards the West."

My father was a Cambridge man, having taken his B.A. there with honours. He always thought that there was no University like Cambridge, and no College like Trinity, of which he was a member. He read hard, so hard that his sight failed him at one time, but his courage was so indomitable that he still continued working for his degree, although he was obliged to pay a reader to be eyes to him.

Cambridge in the twenties and thirties, and Cambridge now, are very different places. I have heard my father speak of Dr. Whewell, Professor Sedgwick, and many another whose name became famous. The Rev. Charles Simeon was a power for good in those days, and the undergraduates used to crowd his church, sitting on the pulpit stairs or anywhere to get within sound of his voice, and his influence for God was not to be told.

A romance attached to my father's University career. He loved the beautiful daughter of Robert Bayly, Esq.—Mr. Robert Bayly of the Western Circuit, Bencher of Gray's Inn; but a Cambridge degree and a call to the Bar were all-important in the eyes of the prospective father-in-law, and the young man had to work for many years before Agnes Bayly became his bride. I have often heard him say that, like Jacob, he served seven years before the wedding bells were allowed to ring.

My father's family was an old family, with a pedigree stretching back through the history of England. We were never particularly great or grand, but those connected with us, with whom we were intertwined, are chronicled in our pedigree, now in the Harleian collection in the British Museum, as "an ancient and knightly family."

"Handsome is as handsome does" is a sound proverb, always true. The Normans at the Conquest were very probably no better than the people whom they conquered, but there came over with Duke William a certain Reginald de Raoul de Bailleul, of good Norman family. His property was a castle in Normandy called Renoard. He came in for a share of the spoils, and was made Viscount of Shrewsbury, 1080, and was afterwards married to Aimeria, niece of Roger, Earl of Shrewsbury.

Roger the Earl had adopted this girl, and showed great affection for her by treating her as a daughter. I cannot pretend to unravel such a love story, and the old chronicler, Ordericus Vitalis, gives me small help here, but Doomsday Book tells us that William the Conqueror bestowed upon Reginald four manors —Weston, Barton, Bruton, and Newton, to be held *in capita en chef du roi.* Reginald was evidently a fortunate man, and he became possessed, possibly through his wife, of no less than sixty-six manors, conferred upon him by Roger Montgomerie, Earl of Shrewsbury, his uncle by marriage, whose Viscount he became. Those old days were dark and stormy ones. The Earl of Shrewsbury and his Viscount were always fighting the Welsh, and the large county conquered by the brave old warrior, the Earl of

Shrewsbury, still bears the name of "Montgomery-shire." Earl Roger was killed fighting the Welsh in the time of William the Second.

Meanwhile another Reginald grew up, the eldest son of the first Reginald and Aimeria, and he held the lands in Normandy. He was doubtless young and rash, and, like many another young man, he espoused the cause of Duke Robert in his attempt to gain the crown of England. It was a very bad move for Reginald, for it cost him his castle of Renoard in Normandy, which Henry the First burned to the ground, and this ill-fortune sent him on a crusade against the Moors in Spain. The second son of Reginald and Aimeria, Hugh de Bailleul de Weston, succeeded his father in the English estates in the time of Henry the First.

We pass through Ralph or Ranulphus, the third in succession in the time of Stephen, to Sir Hamo de Weston, a famous Knight Crusader in the stormy times of Richard Cœur de Lion. He went, as he considered, to do God's work in trying to wrest the Holy Sepulchre from the unbeliever; and I like to think of him and another Crusader, whose story I must tell later, as belonging in those rough and warlike days to a band of men who hazarded and often gave their lives, although in an ignorant way, to God's service. Sir Hamo lies in the church of Weston-under-Lyziard, near Rugeley, with his feet crossed, to this day. Two generations passed, and another Crusader appeared upon the scenes in the time of Henry the Third and Edward the First.

An interesting story is told about him. In one of the battles in the then far east he had a hand-to-hand

conflict with a Saracen standard-bearer; Hugh, or Hugo de Weston, after superhuman efforts, killed the Saracen, and took the sacred standard. For this brave deed Prince Edward changed his crest, giving him a Saracen's head, with the death cry of the dusky warrior, "*I am spent*," for his motto. The old crest, an eagle and the Saracen's head, were both used by the family, until the Earl of Portland returned to the oldest, the eagle, retaining both shields. The eagle is used to the present day, and although, being on the distaff side, I have no right to it, I like to think of my old forbears when fighting some of my own battles.

We must hurry down the stream of time, past Sir John de Weston, Constable of Bordeaux, in the time of Edward the Second and Edward the Third, to whose memory there is an old stained window in Weston Church, to Richard Weston, the eldest son of Sir John by his second wife. So things come and go in this changing world. I like to think of Robert Weston, Lord Chancellor of Ireland in the days of Queen Elizabeth, because he was a sincere and earnest Christian, served his Queen faithfully, and was esteemed by her. We never know how far a good man's prayers may travel for his successors.

Richard Weston, the first Earl of Portland, was a different character altogether; he was a collateral His career as far as this world was concerned was striking. Knighted by James the First, he was made Privy Councillor, and Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1624, created a Baron in 1628, Earl of Portland 1631, and received the Order of the Garter in 1633. He was also made Governor of the Isle of Wight,

and Lieutenant-Governor of Southampton. Charles the First was much attached to him, but his life ended in 1634, and he lies in the Portland Chapel in Winchester Cathedral. Curiously enough his son Jerome married Lady Frances Stuart, daughter of the Duke of Lennox, and a ward of Charles the First, who gave her away, and Archbishop Laud performed the wedding ceremony.

So the figures flit across the scene. This Jerome Weston had a son named Charles, who was killed in a naval battle against the Dutch in 1665. He was unmarried, and the title soon became extinct, to be revived again by William the Third, who bestowed it on the present holders, whose title became Dukes of Portland.

I hope that I have wearied no one with these reminiscences. My father was much interested in our genealogical details, and used to say "that any vitality in the old stock should be used for God and for Good." There is not much naval element; I wish there was more. Charles Weston, third Earl of Portland, was killed afloat; but he was in the army, and the soldier element predominated in those old days.

In my mother's family we had a brave sailor, Captain Richard Rundle Burges, R.N., of H.M.S. *Ardent*. He was killed on the 11th October 1797, also fighting the Dutch, cut in two by a chain shot, and his bravery and success were so great that Parliament voted a sum of money to erect a monument to him in St. Paul's Cathedral, where it stands, if I remember rightly, in the nave, in the south aisle. The inscription runs thus:—

"Sacred to the memory of Richard Rundle Burges, Esq., Commander of His Majesty's sloop the *Ardent*, who fell in the 45th year of his age while bravely supporting the honour of the British Flag in a daring and successful attempt to break the enémy's line near Camperdown, on the 11th October 1797. His skill, coolness, and intrepidity immensely contributed to a victory equally advantageous and glorious to his country.

"That grateful country, by the unanimous act of her Legislature, enrols his name high in the list of those heroes who, under the blessing of Providence, have established and maintained her naval superiority and her exalted rank among the nations."

Such is the short simple story of a hero ; his monument is not far from that of his brave commander, Admiral Lord Duncan. When in the smoke of the battle the signal came from Admiral Duncan that the *Ardent* should engage, Captain Burges did not think his vessel close enough, and he reserved his fire until he was so near to the enemy that every shot went home. Death was busy on board the *Ardent*. Hers was one of the smallest crews in Admiral Duncan's fleet, but her death roll was the largest—148 men killed and wounded. Her stout oaken hull had 98 round shot taken from it, sufficient hard knocks for one day's battle.

When Captain Burges fell his ship was surrounded by no fewer than five of her enemies, but she continued to fight till quite disabled. In his despatch home Admiral Duncan wrote : "And here I have to lament the death of Captain Burges of His Majesty's Ship *Ardent*, who brought that ship into action in the

most gallant and masterly manner, but was unfortunately killed soon after. However, the ship continued the action till quite disabled. The public have lost a good and gallant officer in Captain Burges, and I, with others, a sincere friend." He was a fine officer, and it is recorded of him that he was a man of honour, integrity, and gentlemanlike and courteous manners, and he became one of the heroes of Camperdown.

My cousin, Ellie Bayly (Edna Lyall), mentions that in the early part of her career, when downcast and disheartened by the chilling attitude of publishers, she received new impetus and energy while standing one dark day before the monument, and she felt that the success that had attended this old member of her family would, by God's grace, attend her if she persevered. She did persevere, and won a position in the front rank of English writers of her day.

Ancient history having passed in review, I must begin with my own earliest recollections. My memory goes back to a time when I was a very small child, and when my delight was to ride round the room on my father's shoulders, clutching his hair. I am afraid that I was very much spoilt, as two elder children, Charles and Robert, died as babies, and when a third child, a daughter, was born and lived, the joy was very great.

My father was then at the Bar, a member of Lincoln's Inn, where he had chambers ; he worked hard, but his great delight was to get back to his wife and little child. I have a shadowy remembrance of the romps that we had together ; few children could possess a kinder or more indulgent father—

my playmate as a child, my guide, teacher, confidant, and friend as I grew up. He was a very handsome man, with black hair, dark eyes, and good features—very like the picture of the old Earl of Portland by Van Eyck (some say Vandyke) that hung in our dining-room ; and he was also a very scientific man, becoming a Fellow both of the Geological Society and the Royal Astronomical Society ; best of all he was one who always looked from Nature up to Nature's God.

He never believed that God's great books of Revelation and Creation could clash, even if they appeared to do so ; it was our duty to suspend our judgment, and we should see how wonderfully they would agree if we waited for more light on the book of Science, which might err, but God's Revelation never.

Both my father and my mother, who was the dearest of mothers, were earnest Christians, having given their hearts to God in the early days of their lives, before their marriage, through the preaching of the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel, at that time a most popular and earnest Evangelical clergyman in London. It required some courage in those days to avow yourself a decided Christian, and to do such work as visiting the sick and teaching little children. Young ladies in the twentieth century can do anything, and go anywhere ; in my mother's young days such things were not permitted for a moment ; if she went out she must be attended by a footman. Those were times before gas, before the London police, before railways and steamships, to say nothing of telegraphs and telephones. George the Third was

king, and Merrie England was anything but the comfortable and free home that it is now.

Coaches did the journey between London and York, London and Exeter, &c.; the Bath coach was a crack coach, and "old mother Bristol," as the Bristol coach was called, was a smart turn-out. Young ladies spent a great deal of time at home, in old-fashioned housekeeping, embroidery, papier-mâché and tambour work, and "slumming" was unheard of. A sedan-chair carried them to evening assemblies, and for journeys into the country it was either the public coach or posting. I have heard my mother tell of the delights of going on the Western Circuit with her father. At that time, about 1830, the judges posted in their own carriages, horsed at various stages; the sheriffs met them at the borders of the counties, and the mayor and corporation of the city in which the Assizes were held, also met them in great state as they entered the city boundary, as representatives of the king.

Mr. Robert Bayly used to take his wife and a daughter, on several occasions that daughter was my mother. I am afraid that the terrible outcome of some of the trials did not affect the young ladies or the young barristers. The Assize balls were duly held and, I doubt not, keenly enjoyed. My grandfather was a man of great acumen and forensic knowledge, and he was merciful withal; he was a Bencher of Gray's Inn and loved his profession.

Arrived at Plymouth from Exeter, the ladies of the party generally stayed with their relations who had settled there for many years, while the father proceeded to Bodmin. I was favoured indeed in both

my grandfathers. On my father's side, Samuel Weston, descended lineally from the old stock, was an embodiment of a fine old English gentleman, full of probity and honour ; while my grandfather, on my mother's side, was a specimen of the old-time barristers of the land, a man respected and honoured.

A young and beautiful girl was my mother, with life opening before her, when she was convinced, as I have said, of the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ, and became a true Christian ; the young couple, whose engagement lasted for seven years, were of one heart and one mind, and helped each other in the Christian life.

In those old days Bloomsbury was a district almost sacred to the law ; instead of being, as now, noted for its hotels and boarding and lodging houses, it was peopled by gentlemen "learned in the law." Queen Square, Bedford Square, Russell Square, were mostly tenanted by Judges, K.C.'s, and others of high standing and long purses ; the streets leading out of these squares were the abode of junior members of the profession. The means of locomotion were restricted, and legal men walked backwards and forwards to chambers in Gray's Inn, Lincoln's Inn, or the Temple ; it was probably better for them than a rush to catch a district train from Belgravia or the suburbs.

My grandfather lived in Queen's Square, and every house almost sheltered an historical name. I was born in a street leading out of Russell Square, where married barristers congregated, called Great Coram Street. I did not feel very proud of

my birth-place when I saw it a few years ago, and found how it had descended in the social scale.

In 1836 my father and mother were married, and very shortly afterwards King William the Fourth died, and a young girl was called from Kensington Palace to the throne, to become the great Queen-Empress, and to deserve the highest of all titles, "Victoria the Good." Often and often in the twilight my mother used to tell us of the news coming to London in the dead of the night that King William had died at Windsor Castle, and then the next day, that bright June morning, the touching history of the breaking the news to the young girl at Kensington Palace, and the saluting her as Queen.

Her first desire, expressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, "I ask an interest in your prayers, your Grace," was characteristic. The young Queen took all hearts by storm, and my mother's stories of the Proclamation, the Coronation, and, later still, the Queen's marriage with Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg, afterwards the Prince Consort, were better than fairy stories to my childish ears. We were all brought up to be loyal, in a few words, to "fear God, and to honour the King"; but my mother little thought that the Queen, whose advent caused her so much joy, would many years afterwards "command" her daughter's attendance at Windsor Castle, that she might hear about her work, and speak loving words of cheer that will never be forgotten. The marriage of the Queen took place very early in 1840, and my mother was able to see a good deal of the interesting ceremonial. All this I can only give from stories

told in after years on winter evenings when we loved to cluster round her knees.

In 1842 a little brother, Robert Bayly Weston, came to cheer my solitude, a bright splendid boy, who would have made a history for himself had he lived, but God took him in 1848 when 5½ years of age. After him came my only sister Emily, and then another brother, Charles. We were a large and yet a small family, several brothers in heaven, and three of us here on earth. After the birth of my sister my mother's health, that had never been very strong, failed, and the unanimous opinion of her medical men was that she would not live long in London.

At that time I was about five or six years old, and I have a shadowy remembrance of leaving the London house and being taken to Paddington, and thence by that new-fangled arrangement, the railway. Bath, years before, had been the fashionable place for the "cure," the great health-resort of Beau Nash and all the leaders of fashion. Those days had passed away, but still the old streets and promenades remained, the Pump Room and the Baths were still under the shadow of the Abbey; outside many of the Queen's Square houses hung the great bronze extinguishers into which the link-men used to thrust their torches on carrying some lady of fashion into the wide entrance-hall on her return from rout, card-party, or ball. Bath had become a place for education, and houses and crescents climbed Lansdown Hill, which overlooked the city.

My new home, and my home for many years,

was Sion Place, Sion Hill, on Lansdown, standing prettily embowered in trees and lawns. This move was the first great event in my life, and the journey by rail in those days would leave a never-to-be-forgotten impression on a child of five years old. Our new home, with its country sights and sounds, fields and farms stretching away behind, became very dear, and when, in 1846, a little brother came to complete our family circle our joy was great.

I can see that bright nursery now, and the night nursery behind, in which we little folks slept. Children's impressions are strong, and die hard. One of my remembrances of the day nursery, as clear to-day as ever, is the fact that two coloured pictures of typical bluejackets of those days hung on the wall—"Outward Bound" and "Homeward Bound"; I was never tired of looking at them, and of thinking how much I should like to know those brave men, and to hear all that they had to say. I little thought then that I should count so many hundreds of England's bluejackets my friends, and should be proud to do so.

From our nursery windows we had extensive views, and we used to think that the pine-trees on Coombe Down, away on the horizon, were palm-trees growing in Africa, and that the black thunder-storms that often came from the north were sent by the farmer whose homestead stood in that direction.

My first deep sorrow was the death of my little brother Bobby. He was a handsome, bright-spirited boy, full of fun and frolic, and he and I were inseparables, and perfect pickles, delighting in every

kind of childish adventure, and, I am afraid, a terror to our nurse. I distinctly remember a journey to Brighton, and a happy time with our grandmother at Brunswick Terrace, now almost in Hove, then the sudden illness that came down as a "bolt from the blue," and death drew near, the first that I had ever seen. I remember how the dear little fellow repeated as his last words—

> "I think when I read that sweet story of old,
> When Jesus was here among men,
> How He called little children as lambs to His fold,
> I should like to have been with them then."

Clasping a little ship in his hands that had been given him by his father, and with these sweet words on his lips, he was gathered home, and I sobbed myself to sleep heartbroken.

Since then I have often thought how deep my parents' sorrow must have been—another little son removed to the Home above. Children have strange and often terrifying ideas about death, but we were taught so much about the Good Shepherd and the loving Saviour that heaven seemed very near. This was the last death in our family until my parents were taken home, each at a good old age. My sister Emily, my brother Charlie, and myself have passed through life together.

Soon after my little brother's death, after we had returned to Bath, an incident occurred that left a very vivid impression on my mind. We had been promised a delightful trip on a bright summer day to Keynsham, a pretty village on the river Avon, near Bristol. My father always laid himself out to

make his children happy, and my mother, who was an invalid, and confined very much to the sofa, furthered all these trips, and delighted to hear what we had done on our return.

How we counted the days and watched the weather as the eagerly looked for Saturday drew near. We were to get up early and to walk to Twerton, a country station not far from our house. Of course we could scarcely sleep, and at break of day we were peering eagerly from the nursery window to see what the day was like. O joy! it was a bright, beautiful summer morning. Dressing and breakfast were soon over, and, carrying our luncheons, and my father slinging his geological basket and hammer over his shoulder, we were soon under weigh. Twerton was reached, and in those old days, when foot-bridges were not thought of, the line had to be crossed. I ran on, and when about half-way across, with a whistle and a roar, the Bristol express came round a curve right upon me. What happened I scarcely know, but I found myself in my father's strong arms, and heard his fervent "Thank God" as he snatched me from the jaws of death.

Many a narrow escape I had in my childish days; once running away in the Sydney Gardens, I was dashed headlong against a stone parapet, and was picked up by my horrified mother and a strange lady, whom we knew afterwards as the Countess of Camperdown, apparently dead.

Once again, when out in a rowing boat on the Hamoaze, the harbour at Devonport, which in after years I was to know so well, a steamer came down

upon us, the boatman lost one of his oars, and could only row in a circle; I can see the steamer now, looming above us, and her paddles cleaving the water. At the last moment our cries were heard, and the order was given to "reverse the engines" and to "port the helm," and we just escaped by God's goodness. And once again a careless marksman, with a rifle, fired across a public road down which I was walking; I heard the sharp ping of one bullet as it whistled past my ear, and the thud of another as it struck a tree close by: but the loving care of God was over me yet again, and I was saved from sudden death.

Many a happy picnic I can remember as the years of childhood passed on, to Wick Rocks, to Hampton Down, to Bradford-on-Avon by the barge on the canal, a grand water trip. Then we looked forward to summer holidays, with a month at Tenby or Ilfracombe, as the case might be.

All these glorious outings were made of value; we searched for fossils, for ferns, for sea-weeds, crabs, and sea-anemones; and we were taught their names and habits, and shown their beauties. I only wish that I could remember now all that I learned of British flowers, ferns, grasses, mosses, and lycopods, as well as the wonders to be found on the sands and rocks and in the tide pools.

The journey to either Ilfracombe or Tenby was always made by steamer from Bristol in those days; the Avon and the upper part of the Bristol Channel were delightful, but if there was a capful of wind, once get the Flat and Steep Holnes astern, and the steamer

became very lively, and we young folks somewhat taciturn.

If the trip was to Tenby the dreaded Worms Head had to be doubled, and I remember to this day the awful feeling that the ringing of the dinner-bell evoked ; but once on dry land all the troubles fled away and the days passed like wildfire—digging and building sand castles to be washed away by the next tide, bathing, shrimping, hunting for anemones and crabs, all was delightful, until one day I seized a large crab not quite in the right place. He managed to get his big nippers into each of my thumbs, I was handcuffed by the crab, and shrieking with pain, I am ashamed to say, and it was only when he was killed that his grasp was unloosed.

One of my most solemn early impressions was hearing a sermon at Immanuel Church, Weston-super-Mare, in which the preacher graphically described the Last Day and the Great White Throne, and besought us all to give Christ our hearts, and to flee from the wrath to come. I was much awed, and, in a childlike way, asked Christ to be my Saviour and to shield me in that day ; the impression faded away and became dim, but I have no doubt it was one of the many links in the chain of love that afterwards drew me to God.

And here let me say that I believe in the conversion of children, early and decidedly. A child is never too young to learn to love the Lord Jesus Christ definitely, and to yield heart and life to Him. He blessed little children when on earth, and He blesses them now ; and if parents, instead of waiting till their children are grown up, would lead them to

the Saviour in their tender years, we should see much more vital Christianity. The faith and love of a child will enable him to grasp truth more clearly and decidedly than the grown man ; and if a mother would pray *with* her children, and encourage them to pray, as well as praying *for* them, many a young heart would respond to the infinite love of its Redeemer.

When I was about nine years old I went to my first school as a day boarder ; it was very near my home, but I am afraid that, attended by my nurse, I "*crept like a snail unwillingly to school.*" The mistress was a Miss Spiller, of whom I have a shadowy remembrance, and of whom also I stood somewhat in awe. The house was bright and cheery ; I recollect the long garden stretching down to the High Common with its apple trees—sometimes in blossom, sometimes laden with fruit. Kindergartens were unknown in those days, and memorising was the principal thing ; the spelling-book and elementary arithmetic, also the copy-books in which the copies were set were in vogue. Many a blotted copy gave me bad marks ; and as to arithmetic, the smeared slate and tearful eyes often testified to my failure in the world of figures.

I was, I am sure, rather a naughty child, full of fun, and I daresay that I was troublesome to my teachers, but I made, child as I was, some warm friends among my schoolfellows. I have no doubt that they could tell many tales "out of school" about me that I have forgotten ; but as I write the distant past unrolls itself faintly before me, and I can

see the old house, the old school, the dear faces of father and mother who were all the world to me, my little sister, and younger brother still in the nursery, on whom, I am afraid, in the first stage of school-girl life I wickedly looked down. These scenes pass before me as pictures upon a screen, and as such I try to reproduce them, simple as they are.

CHAPTER II

GIRLHOOD

CHILDHOOD, with all its joys and sorrows, which are photographed on our hearts through life, seems so long, and yet how quickly it passes by.

When I was about twelve years old I was promoted to another school in Somerset Place, Bath; it was one of the best schools at that time. I was a very small and insignificant shrimp, and looked up to the senior girls with great awe and respect. As far as I can remember there were some thirty girls, the schoolroom was large, bright, and sunny, and the desks were ranged round it. Pianos resounded in every room, and masters came and went. It was a new and a large world to me, and brought its temptations and trials.

Of course I duly took my place in a low class, and soon began to find the work pretty stiff, for it was "real earnest"; school routine was composed of all work and little play. Croquet and tennis were not invented; hockey, the horizontal bar, &c., would have excited a holy horror in the minds of the ladies that ruled our girls' schools, or, as they were called, "young ladies' establishments," in the fifties: a walk once a day round the Park, or up Lansdown Hill, two by two, graduated as to height, the tall girls

first, and the young ones bringing up the rear, was considered exercise enough for young ladies: in the summer evenings it was supplemented by a stroll in a small garden at the back of the house.

Our athletics were represented by a drill-sergeant, who came once a week and taught us stiff soldierly walking, and a French dancing mistress, who endeavoured not only to teach us dancing, but to instil elegance of pose and deportment; these lessons I thoroughly enjoyed as a little outlet for animal spirits, and a desire for more exercise than was thought suitable for young ladies.

On the weekly holiday, however, the reaction set in, and with one or two chosen friends, carrying our luncheon, we used to make trips into the country, ostensibly for primrosing, blackberrying, nutting, and so forth; then we climbed gates and hedges, and raced across fields like veritable tomboys, coming back bronzed, scratched, and torn, but supremely happy. I made many and true friends then, and we are friends now, and a familiarity and *bonhomie* exists between us that years cannot quench. There are few friends like school friends; and there is, I believe, no discipline better than the school world, where everyone finds his or her level, where angles are knocked off, and lifelong friendships are made.

I am afraid that I was by no means a pattern school-girl; I was much too impetuous, daring, and given to frolic and practical jokes. My revered mistress told me on one occasion that "I should bring down my parents' grey hairs (but they were not grey then) with sorrow to the grave." This statement troubled me for a

time, but as I saw no signs of impending sorrow at home I soon got over it. Our punishments were committing to memory passages from classical writers, writing so many hundred lines, drinking large doses of camomile tea, a very noxious decoction said to improve the memory, and, in very bad cases, solitary confinement or expulsion. I am glad to say that I escaped the two last, but I had frequent experience of the three first, the camomile tea having imprinted itself most clearly on my memory.

However, I got on with my studies, and rose from class to class, occupying the coveted position of head of the school before I left. Our studies included English grammar and spelling, composition, recitation, arithmetic, geography, and history, science as far as contained in Mangnall's Questions and a few other books, French, German, drawing, music, and singing ; this was about the curriculum, including, of course, religious instruction, for girls of my time.

I had the great privilege of spending my Sundays at home, and they were in the best sense of the word happy days. As my memory travels back to my early childhood I have always a remembrance of happy Sundays ; nothing dull or gloomy was ever associated with them, and that not because we were good children and naturally enjoyed good things, but because the Christianity and sound common-sense of our parents made Sunday the happiest day of the week.

We were more with them on a Sunday than on any other day. Our week-day games and books were put away on Saturday nights, and our bright Sunday picture-books and Sunday puzzles were brought out. Parents seem to leave their children

now on Sundays for "week-end" engagements, but in the old days the week-end engagements were at home. As little children the Sunday picture-book, or puzzle, which our father helped us to look through, or put together, while he told us the beautiful Bible stories, always made a happy hour; then the pretty hymns for children just coming into vogue were delightful, and I can see the little party now standing around the piano, while the mother played, and the children sang: *"O that will be joyful," "A little ship was on the sea," "I think when I read that sweet story of old,"* and many another, with more energy than harmony.

As we grew older we were taken to church in the morning, and it was considered a treat to go to church, and later in the afternoon there was a stroll through the fields, and the honour of dining with our parents and not in the nursery. Yes, Sunday was a bright and happy day from start to finish, and this is what it should be. We went to All Saints' Church, where a little later Canon Fleming ministered for some years.

About this time I had my first taste of travel; it was on a very small scale, but I thought of it by day, and dreamed of it by night; it was no less than a journey to Ross and a trip down the Wye by boat and waggonette—the beauties of Symond's Yat, and the grand view from the summit, the visits to Raglan and Goodrich Castles, and so on to Tintern.

We were a party of four—my father in charge, and the three children. I have never seen Tintern Abbey since and I never want to, as I should probably be disappointed. The picture is sharp and clear

in my memory, the bend in the river, the Abbey old and hoary standing on its green sward, and then, best of all, the visit to the Abbey in the moonlight. Sir Walter Scott said:

> "If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright:
> Go visit it in the pale moonlight."

The same may be said of Tintern. Flooded with moonbeams, its arches and pillars throwing deep shadows, and the whole structure clothed with the vague glimmering beauty of the light of a summer moon, which threw both the Abbey and the river into silver—all this was an experience not to be repeated. The next day on to Chepstow with its old Castle, and then back to Bath, my father's geological basket heavier than when he started.

My knowledge of geology is very meagre, but it was my delight as a school-girl on half-holidays not only to help my father in collecting fossils (many an Encrinite, Trilobite, and Ammonite having been unearthed by my quick fingers and sharp eyes), but I was also allowed to help him in arranging his collection, sorting out, mounting, and naming under his supervision. He had a large collection, and frequently used to start on long geological trips to the coal measures for ferns and fossil trees, to the country round Lyme Regis, and other places, to the valley of the Thames, &c., for fossils belonging to the London clay, and so on. With hammer, chisels, and fishing-basket he would walk twenty and thirty miles a day, and would return, to my great delight, with his treasures.

The country people looked upon him rather

suspiciously, and wondered what all this knocking about of the rocks meant; it did not seem quite canny! One old lady in the train complained grievously of a fishing-basket being brought into the railway carriage, and of the very disagreeable smell of the fish in the aforesaid basket. She was amazed when she saw the stones, and gave it as her opinion "that a man who carried stones about on his back must be somewhat crackit in the head."

And so school life and home life passed brightly and happily on, without care or trouble or the slightest anxiety about anything. My young days were simple days, but happy days. School work grew as I worked my way up. I was fond of music and singing, and had the advantage of very good masters, and I was very fond of composition, which was then a strong point at schools. A subject was given and the girls had to write an essay upon it. These essays were read and judgment passed upon them, and marks given. Some of the girls were completely nonplussed, and would sit for hours, pen in hand, but no thoughts came.

Here I was able to give a little help, although I can see now that I ought not to have done it, and am quite prepared to be lectured as to being underhand and deceitful, yet I may truly say that this thought never occurred to me. The girls wanted help, and I was glad to give it. So I would write five or six essays on the same subject, each one different from the other. The girls read them and received their marks, and I was greatly improved thereby in composition. But looking back upon

it, I see plainly enough that they were sailing under false colours, and that the false colours were my own hoisting; but, as I have said before, I was by no means a good girl at school, though I believe that I was fairly popular.

We used from time to time to have grand suppers in various bedrooms, and sometimes in the box-room. I can see these suppers now! They generally took place when a box or hamper had come from home, although the rule was that these boxes and hampers were to be given into the charge of the housekeeper, and that each girl was to have a share. But that always seemed unfair, and besides that, the rare fun and excitement of a midnight supper was lost.

The first point was to smuggle in the hamper and stow it away in a quiet corner. This was difficult, but not impossible, although there was always a danger that it would be found and confiscated. The friends were invited, and when the eventful night came, and girls and mistresses had retired to bed, the owner of the hamper would steal forth, and would unpack and lay out the supper to the best advantage. The danger of lighting the gas was too great, and candles were used, stuck round the top of a box. The supper was of course delightful, and the excitement intense; the creaking of a board, the rustling of a leaf outside, or the scratching of a mouse would bring our hearts into our mouths. All the good things possible were bolted, and the rest swept into the hamper, and we stole away, white-robed figures, to our beds.

On one occasion we were not to escape so easily. One of the mistresses woke up, and her room being

at an angle with the room in which the feast was going on, and the blind having been most carelessly left up, she espied a glimmering light, thought of fire, and proceeded to find out the cause. We were all in full blast, making speeches, when all at once a footfall fell upon our ears, and the next moment a tall figure, candle in hand, and severity on every line of her countenance, stood before us—we were caught in the act.

In answer to my doubtless very improper suggestion that she should join us, she took all our names to report to the head mistress, confiscated our good things, and ordered us to bed. The next morning judgment fell upon us, and for several half-holidays we were writing out the impositions, in hundreds of lines from Shakespeare and Milton.

The important and exciting day of the term was when the decisions were arrived at and the prizes given. The whole school was assembled, with many of their friends, and a concert took place, vocal and instrumental. I had to take part in both, and I literally knew what it was to feel my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth when I had to sing, and my hands trembled as if I had the palsy, and the music swam before me when I had to play. This stage fright gradually passed away, but for years it possessed me, and I never can forget my agony when, acting as honorary organist at St. Stephen's Church, I waited for the bell to cease chiming, knowing that then I must begin my voluntary.

After our concert at school the head mistress read the 13th chapter of the 1st Corinthians, to show us that the spirit of love, and not of jealousy, should

fill our hearts. I am afraid that we did not attend much to the Bible, as the fateful Prize List was about to be read. At last the secret was out, and one girl after another went up to receive her well-earned prize amidst the applause of her schoolfellows; and then, O joy! the holidays commenced, and we were free.

And so the school years rolled on. The year 1855 was an eventful one for the country. With the year 1854 war was declared against Russia, and wild excitement reigned; the soldier and the sailor, not thought much of in times of peace, were everything in time of war. Ships were commissioned and sent to the Baltic and the Black Sea, regiments marched to various railway stations to entrain for Portsmouth, Southampton, and other ports, from whence on crowded transports they sailed for the seat of war. Poor fellows, they went off amidst cheers and band playing; but the siege of Sebastopol, and the terrible winter in the Crimea, where food and clothes were at a premium, and the men frozen to death in the trenches, left its mark upon thousands. We were all greatly excited, and worked hard to make warm things for the soldiers; they probably never reached them, but we did our best, and rejoiced as we thought of the men enjoying our mufflers and comforters. Every scrap of news was caught hold of; some of the girls had relations in the army, and the list of killed and wounded was eagerly scanned.

I had no relatives in the Crimea, so the terrible news was shorn of its horrors to me; but my time was to come. My two soldier cousins were serving

in India, although my cousin Charles, Captain, afterwards Major Weston, was in England with his wife and little golden-haired daughter at this time. No sooner had the black storm-cloud of the Crimean war rolled by than the blacker storm of the Indian Mutiny broke over the country, with its fearful massacres and unspeakable wrongs.

General Wheeler, Commandant at Cawnpore, had lived in Bath, and we were acquainted with both himself and his charming daughter, Miss Wheeler. How little we thought what a sad fate awaited her, as in order to escape from the Sepoys she met her death. The well of Cawnpore will always be a sacred spot to every Englishman. My cousin Charles was ordered out to join his regiment, leaving wife and child in safe keeping at home; when he got out, the regiment having become disaffected and having gone to pieces, he was given a post as captain (or in naval language, lieutenant), in the Naval Brigade, composed of bluejackets and marines, under the command of Captain Peel, R.N.

The bluejackets' dash and gallantry just suited the young military officer. After a while there was a fort to be taken, and the command of the expedition was given into Captain Weston's hands. He drew out the plans with soldierlike care, and divided his men; a detachment was to be led by himself, and another detachment was lying ambushed to take the fort in the rear. The night was dark, and all went well, until the commanding officer received a shot through the chest, which carried in a button and a piece of his uniform.

He fell, and the bluejackets forgot all the arrange-

ments, and only thinking of avenging their captain, they charged over him ; the men in ambush joined them, and by force of dash and numbers they took the fort, spiked the guns, put the rebels to the sword, and, dashing back, secured their wounded officer, and carried him to a place of safety.

I have often heard him praise the bluejackets as "splendid fellows, but a little too hasty, and somewhat forgetful of strategy" on shore. Be it remembered these were bluejackets of the olden times, but their pluck and courage was only equalled by their kindness and tenderness ; they nursed him under the doctor, if not with the skill of a trained nurse, yet with the gentleness of a woman ; and when he was ordered down the river to Calcutta, and thence to England, a party of them took him in the boat, and parted with him, after carrying him to his hotel, with tears in their honest eyes and parting cheers for their "soldier captain, who was the best officer they had ever served under."

He returned to England looking very ill, with his arm in a sling and useless—X rays were not known then—and as month after month passed on it seemed unlikely that he would ever get the use of it ; but, staying at Dunrobin Castle, the Duke of Sutherland's seat in Scotland, one night a fire broke out ; the servants and all the gentlemen visitors manned the hose and the pumps ; the young soldier, in the excitement of the moment, thought nothing of his arm, and, after one moment of agony, pumped with all his might, and from that time the strength and power so long lost came back to him. This cousin is alive as I write these words, and is every inch a soldier and

an Englishman; and although he might have wished that my work had been among the men of his own profession, he says: "Well, you can't do too much for Jack, who has done so much for me."

My other soldier cousin was Captain Gould Weston (afterwards Lieutenant-Colonel Hunter-Weston); he was detailed to Lucknow under General Lawrence, whom he loved as a son loves a father; together they went through the awful siege, and General Lawrence died in his arms. In those days news was slow in transmission, and often incorrect, and I shall never forget the anxiety we went through, not knowing the fate of our dear ones, especially Gould, shut up in the Residency. He was mentioned in despatches for bravery, as was Charles, and many of their plucky acts I may have forgotten, but one Lucknow incident imprinted itself on my memory.

The water in the garrison had become tainted, and the one well of fresh water lay down a narrow pathway, which was so swept by the enemy's shot, that it was called "Death's Alley"; every well was useful, but some dried up and others got tainted, and there was nothing fit for the women and children except this one; the men, being stronger, could manage with other wells.

Who would volunteer to go for this water and risk death? I am proud to say that a young officer volunteered to do it, and fearlessly he went down "Death's Alley"; he was seen by the Sepoys, and shot and shell whistled around and over him; calmly he went and drew the water, and as calmly returned, untouched. "I thought of the women and children,"

he said ; " I could not bear to hear them moaning, and the children crying for water."

The joyful day when the skirl of the bagpipes heralding the approaching Highlanders was heard could never be forgotten. It was a joy indeed to welcome this brave fellow back, and it is my happiness and pride now to see the traits of the father in his son, Lieutenant-Colonel Aylmer Hunter-Weston, D.S.O., who distinguished himself in the Boer War by his gallant conduct.

CHAPTER III

WHAT SHALL I DO WITH MY LIFE?

I WAS now between sixteen and seventeen years of age, and had been for some months at the head of the school, and the time came on for leaving. It was a time that I had looked forward to with great delight, and yet when it came I was sorry—sorry to leave the many warm friends that I had made, and sorry to embark on an unknown future. How true I have since found the words to be:

> "My barque is wafted to the shore
> By love divine:
> And on the helm there rests a hand,
> Other than mine."

The Good Shepherd who had watched over me during the careless days of school life was going to draw me nearer to Himself. I did not know it, and should have repudiated it violently at that time. Although I was leaving school, and life stretched before me, I did not wish to be "religious"; I had other hopes and other aims, and the future looked very rosy and golden.

Just before this time a young clergyman, the Rev. James Fleming, afterwards Canon Fleming, was appointed to All Saints' Church; he succeeded the Rev. Arthur Sugden, who was well known

to us, and as school-girls are violent partisans, and have more heart than judgment, we resented the change, and thought that Mr. Sugden had been forced by the then Rector of Walcot to resign. Whether this was true or not I cannot say, but all the girls, myself included, were bitterly opposed to Mr. Fleming; of course he knew nothing of this, but I carried my resentment so far that I would not listen to his preaching, but stopped my ears, and read novels during the sermons.

Mr. Fleming's preaching, as I knew afterwards to my joy, was clear, faithful, and vigorous—Christ first, last, and midst; and it told upon his congregation; the numbers increased until the church would scarcely hold them, but I was untouched still. How little we know the course of God's loving Providence. Had any one spoken personally to me in those days I should have resented it, for I was reserved and proud, and it would have driven me further off; but the Holy Spirit drew me on, and little by little I began to listen to the preaching, then I became interested, but I was hard and stony indeed.

I knew that my parents were praying for me, and yet—no, I could not give up, as I thought, youth and society for Christ. And so some months passed by, and Mr. Fleming was anxious that I should join his confirmation class. If I was hard and proud, I was honest; I had seen so many going forward to confirmation, in which they would promise to renounce the world in order that they might come out at the Easter ball, that I went so far as to tell Mr. Fleming of my difficulties, and he most kindly and sympathetically entered into my feelings, and advised me

to wait until the rite should become a reality to me, and in the meantime not to forget prayer, and to study my Bible.

This I did, and gradually the mists rolled away. I saw myself as God saw me, as a sinner indeed, only to be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son, that cleanseth from all sin; and as I rested my all upon the Saviour the burden of sin rolled away, and I realised the glorious truth that He had borne my sins, and that by His stripes I was healed.

I was happy indeed, life had a new meaning to me. I remember writing a little note to my father and mother and telling them all about it, and how overjoyed they were. I found, to my amazement, that they had been praying for this from my babyhood; the next thing was to tell Mr. Fleming, and to ask to join the confirmation class. I need not say how kindly he welcomed me, and how he rejoiced that he had been the means of so much blessing to me, and so a friendship commenced between us, which grew and strengthened with years.

It was a sad blow to us all when he went to Camberwell, but his success and popularity was always a joy. I met him from time to time, and spoke in his parish when he was at St. Michael's, Chester Square. He took the greatest interest in my work among the sailors, and became one of the Trustees of the Royal Sailors' Rests, which post he held until his death. He wrote me many a kind and loving note, and our friendship of over forty years was never marred by any misunderstanding. I often used to wonder that the man who could draw Sunday after

Sunday such congregations of all ranks—the aristocracy, Members of Parliament, thinking and scientific men, and working folk—did not become somewhat puffed up ; but he was always the same, the simplicity that was in Christ was in him ; there was no thought of self, the Master was his all in all, and his main desire was to hold the Lord Jesus Christ up as a Prince and a Saviour ; and whether he preached at Sandringham or at St. Michael's, or recited to our bluejackets and their wives in the large hall at the Royal Sailors' Rest, Portsmouth, his charming personality won all hearts. He has gone to his reward, and I value more than tongue can tell a message of love that he sent me just before he passed away.

I duly went through his confirmation class, and was confirmed by the Bishop of Bath and Wells in Walcot Parish Church. It was a solemn service to me ; I felt the reality of it ; I had given my heart to Christ, and my one desire was to be used in His service, and I felt that confirmation enabled me to stand up boldly on my Master's side.

The Bishop's earnest fatherly admonitions, the bright face of Mr. Fleming, my spiritual father, and the hand laid upon my head in blessing, all combined by God's help to make my confirmation a reality to me, and I began to try to do a little for Him who had done so much for me. I had a class in the Sunday-school, and a few old and invalid people that I used to visit and read to.

The great Adversary never rests : if he finds that those that might have been on his side are slipping from him, and that he cannot hinder the light of God's

love shining in their hearts, he will try to throw dust into their eyes, and so it was in my case. Doubtless to a great extent it was my own fault ; I was becoming unwatchful and cold, slipping back ; outwardly all was the same, but inwardly darkness began to settle down. Higher criticism and new theologies had not come forward under those names, but the same temptation with which the evil one assaulted our first parents in the Garden of Eden, the doubting spirit, has always been current, and that temptation assaulted me.

Dr. Colenso's works were published, and were attracting great attention, and geological science was used by some to undermine the teaching of the Bible. I read these books with avidity, and the darkness gathered round my heart, a sad contrast to the bright sunshine that was there before ; but as in the natural world, the sun was still there, although a London fog had settled upon my spirit. I suppose that we must all buy our own experience, and buy it dearly. I doubted everything, even the love of God ; for hours I used to wander about in the fields swallowed up in a maze of darkness, doubts, and fears, and almost despair.

I quite allow that it must seem strange, as it does to me now, that I did not consult Canon Fleming, or my own father, who, as a scientific man, knew all these difficulties, had battled with them, and had come out on the sunny side. Whether it was pride or reserve in my heart I do not know, but I told no one of the storm that was raging within, and every foothold seemed swept away. I prayed and strove, was diligent in "good works," as they are called, and at

times happiness and tranquillity would come, and I heard what I now know to have been the voice of God's Good Spirit in my heart. Then again doubts, misgivings, sceptical delusions crowded my soul.

At this time my father took up the study of astronomy, in concert with a great friend of his, a naval officer, who had a 10-inch reflector equatorially mounted in his garden. My father gave a great deal of time to the study of the heavens, and eventually started a 6-inch reflector of his own, and joined the Royal Astronomical Society, of which, later, he was elected a Fellow.

Night after night we used to work this telescope, studying the mountains and ravines of the moon, Mars with his snows and strange markings, Jupiter with his satellites, Venus, the most brilliant of the planets, and Saturn with belt and satellites. At our house on Sion Place we were on classical ground, for the great Sir William Herschel had formerly lived but a bowshot from us, and had swept the heavens to such effect, coupled with his wonderful mathematical calculations, that he discovered the planet Uranus.

I cannot describe the delight that this study gave me, and the wonderful views of God's might as Creator; "that there must be a God behind all created things" was firmly impressed upon my mind, and the first words of the Bible became very real to me, "In the beginning GOD."

An eclipse of sun or moon was a very busy time, or an occultation, or a transit, or the approach of a comet, or the study of Mercury, which must be just before sunrise. Many a night slipped away,

and many a daylight hour was spent in bed at this time of my life. I felt that I was not fit to teach others, which was very true, but God was teaching and training me.

Our 6-inch reflector was an excellent instrument, resolving nebulæ, and showing the binary stars of different colours. I seemed to live in fairyland, and the old words were often in my heart, "*the undevout astronomer is mad.*"

It is not surprising to myself that the mental and spiritual conflicts that I had gone through had somewhat undermined my health. The family doctor was called in, and he prescribed fresh air, and plenty of it. I was to throw away books and to take to riding, swimming, walking, &c. &c. This was a very pleasant prescription, and my father soon made arrangements for me to carry it out.

Riding had not been in my curriculum, or swimming either, but both these arts were to be learned, and ere long, dressed in the long riding habit then in vogue, with beaver hat and long feather, I was mounted upon a quiet nag, and under the care of a good riding-master, Mr. Cavill, an old cavalry soldier, I was soon learning to sit, to trot, to canter, and to explore the country round Bath. At last I was advanced to the control of a beautiful little mare with blood in her, "Jenny Lind" by name. She and I became very good friends. I had always a piece of bread or a lump of sugar for her, and her pretty head and bright eyes were turned to greet me, with an eager whinny, as I came out of the house. We knew one another, and felt one, and as I write I can almost hear the wind whistling past, as once on

the open downs we broke into a canter, and then into a gallop, clearing furze-bushes and ditches, sometimes to the consternation of the riding-master and other pupils, whose heavier horses could not keep up with the spirited mare.

All this riding was, I am sure, a great boon to me, and so was the swimming, although I had to learn in the tepid mineral bath near the Pump Rooms. Still the art was acquired, and when in the summer we went to the seaside, my joy in that respect was complete—plain swimming, fancy swimming, treading water, diving for sixpences and other small things thrown into the sea. There are, I think, few more exhilarating and useful arts than that of swimming and diving, disporting yourself in a new element. If I had my will every boy and girl in the country should learn to swim.

Time had slipped by since I had left school, and it was now, as far as I can remember, about the year 1859 or 1860. My father began seriously to think of building a house on the top of Lansdown, some 700 feet above the sea. I know that one of the thoughts in his kind heart was that it would be good for me, as well as for my mother and for my brother and sister, who would go up and down the hill to school, and that also on the top of the hill he could build an observatory, with a larger telescope and a revolving dome. All this was a great delight, and the purchase of the land, the plans for the house and grounds, gave plenty of scope for thought and brain work.

We left our old home in Sion Place for a house in St. James' Square, that had belonged to a friend

of ours, and my father and myself were up and down Lansdown every day, living in the open air, and watching the walls of our new house arise. About a quarter of a mile off Beckford's Tower, as it was called in old days, stood in grounds that were once lovely. The eccentric and wealthy William Beckford lived in Lansdown Crescent, but he wanted to build a high tower on Lansdown, in which he could collect works of art, and from which he could see another tower on his estate at Fonthill ; added to this he made a road from Lansdown Crescent to Lansdown Tower, up and down which he could ride without any one seeing him. I remember the awe with which, as children, we looked at the great nail-studded doors that guarded this wonderful road.

Mr. Beckford seemed to think that the air of Lansdown would make him invulnerable, but he died in due time, leaving instructions to his daughter, the Duchess of Hamilton, that he should be buried in the Tower grounds near to his favourite dog. The Duchess solved the difficulty by giving the Tower and a large piece of land to the Rector of Walcot for the time being for a cemetery. It was duly consecrated, and is very dear to me, for both my father and my mother lie there side by side, awaiting the glorious morning of the resurrection.

While our house was building, I took up the study of the organ ; the instrument fascinated me, the difficulties were great, especially the system of independent pedalling, just coming into vogue ; but the joy of having not only one instrument, but a whole orchestra, by means of stops, at your command,

was so great that I determined, if it was possible, to master it. My uncle, Mr. Charles Fox, had a very fine chamber organ in his house, of some twenty stops and two and a half octaves of pedals; he was very fond of organ music, and encouraged me in my desire, and a cousin of mine, a good organist, taught me the rudiments.

On my return home after this visit to Plymouth, I was most eager to go on with the study, and my parents, both of them very musical, took the greatest interest in this new departure. I think from what I have heard since, that they considered that I had boundless energy which must be worked off, until God Himself should show the channel through which it was to flow.

At that time J. K. Pyne, Esq., was organist of the Abbey Church, Bath; I was placed under his professional teaching, and he took unfeigned interest in my progress. The organ was not in those days in the north transept as at present, but placed across the nave, at the entrance to the choir, on a handsome carved oak organ-loft. It was a fine instrument—three rows of keys and some fifty stops; the original organ was built by Father Schmidt, but it had been added to from time to time; still there were some stops, notably a stopped diapason, of exquisite sweetness.

I studied Rink's Organ School, then advanced to Handel's Choruses, and J. S. Bach's Fugues. The Rev. Charles Kemble was Rector of the Abbey then; he used his vestry as a study, and often used to walk up and down the aisles enjoying the music as I played piece after piece. I studied Thorough Bass

and Counterpoint, and worked up the history of music, and also the mechanism of the organ.

This I wanted sometimes, when a note would begin "ciphering," or something would go wrong. I remember once hearing a story of a frightful noise as the wind was pumped into the organ at St. Margaret's Church, Bath; fortunately the organist was only practising, not playing for a service. He lighted a candle, and went into the organ, to be met by a heavy body swinging through the air, and a cloud of dust, which put out his candle, and he honestly confessed that he left the organ more quickly than he entered it, just in time to see a large cat rushing down the aisle.

After I had worked for some time under Mr. Pyne, as well as I can remember about the years '64 or '65, he proposed that I should aim higher, and, if possible, should become a pupil of the celebrated organist and composer, Dr. S. S. Wesley, of Gloucester Cathedral. Dr. Wesley was a man of genius; he took but few pupils, and the idea of a lady pupil, I may say, as we became fast friends afterwards, was very repugnant to him. However, at the earnest request of his friend, Mr. Pyne, he offered to hear me play, if I would meet him at a church at Cheltenham, and then give his verdict. Accompanied by my mother, I went to Cheltenham, and found the church. It was open, and so was the organ, and the blowers were present, but where was Dr. Wesley? He had been there, and would return again, if I would familiarise myself a little with the instrument.

Stage fright and a strange organ were a terrible

combination ; however, I tried over one or two pieces, got bolder, pulled out all the stops, rang for plenty of wind, and embarked in Bach's Fugue in G Minor ; somehow or other I got on, fingers and feet flew over the keys, and when I closed I heard a deep voice from the church saying, "How soon can you come to Gloucester ?" It was Dr. Wesley, who had come into the church quite unknown to me, arriving, as my mother told me afterwards, when I commenced the fugue.

We had a little friendly conversation, and he asked whether, although I was not going to take up the organ as a profession, I wished to be taught as an amateur or as a professional ? I told him that "I wanted hard, sharp training." "You shall have it," he replied grimly ; "come back with me to Gloucester, and I will ask the Dean to allow you to study upon the Cathedral organ."

Gloucester Cathedral is a magnificent pile, with its stately Norman nave and lovely choir, and at that time, as at Bath, the organ was across the nave, at the entrance to the choir ; for effect there is nothing like it ; the full tones of the pedal stops, and the sweet notes of choir, swell, and solo organs are heard to grand advantage, not to be obtained, I think, when they are placed in transepts, or divided into two or three parts far from each other, as is sometimes the case.

Once at Gloucester I had not only to work, but to work hard, practising five hours a day. I soon became enamoured of the organ, and knew its every stop and beauty. Dr. Wesley was very good, but very strict ; a false note was agony to him, and woe

to you if you repeated it twice, but he spared no pains in teaching me, and was, I may truly say, kindness itself.

Mendelssohn said: "Dr. Wesley is the greatest organist that the world has ever seen, or is likely to see." It was an education indeed to hear him play; his voluntaries were all impromptu compositions. When the chanting of the Psalms came he would close his music-book, open his Prayer-book, and accompany the choir as only a man can who is a genius, and a deeply religious man. The anthems again were a treat, especially his own anthems, and among them perhaps the grandest was "The Wilderness." He greatly delighted in congregational singing, and when the nave of the Cathedral was full it was grand to hear him peal forth the "Old Hundredth," every verse different, and also to hear the outburst of song from that grand congregation.

He played all Handel's choruses from memory, without any music, and when he felt like it, at the close of the service, a magnificent chord would show that he was going to compose a fugue that no one had ever heard before, or probably would ever hear again, unless he jotted it down. All the musical people would remain, and would have a rich treat. He was singularly simple, and disliked the praise of great people, but would often smile at his pupils when they praised him, and say, "Well, I am glad that you liked it."

One of my fellow-pupils was Kendrick Pyne, as he was called then, afterwards Dr. Kendrick Pyne, the organist of Manchester Cathedral. It was pleasant to me, and brought back old times, to read

the well-merited eulogy pronounced upon him a short time ago, when he retired from the organist-ship of the Cathedral, by the Dean of Manchester. He was the son of Mr. Pyne of Bath, and my fellow-pupil at Gloucester: we could both of us tell a few tales of each other, if we cared to, I dare say.

Having to practise for so many hours I was frequently in the Cathedral after dark, the only lights being in the organ-loft, and my own lantern by which to get out of the building. There were many ghost stories connected with the Cathedral, and one was the story of a warrior, I think a Crusader, who was buried under the organ-loft. The story was that he frequently appeared, always after dark, and walked down the nave, his mailed feet and spurs being plainly heard on the pavement, walking to the west end; he would return up one of the side aisles, and his footsteps would suddenly cease at the little chapel where his grave stood.

I had heard all this, and many other stories from my fellow-pupils, but I hope that natural pluck and, above all, trust in God, kept me calm. However, I was to be tested, as the sequel will show. One evening Dr. Wesley was giving me a lesson in the Cathedral after dark; in the feeble glimmer of the lamps in the organ-loft the great columns of the nave looked vast, black, and mysterious indeed. I was studying a difficult piece of music with him, when a messenger arrived, to say that a musical friend was waiting at his house on important business.

"Would you allow me to go for a few minutes," he said, "while you practise that piece? I shall soon return;" adding, as he went down the stairs, "I hope

you will not mind my locking you into the Cathedral ; we are not allowed to leave the doors unfastened." Despising as I did all supernatural fears, I replied, laughing, "Oh no, I have plenty to do, lock me in by all means," and I went on diligently studying the difficult music, without giving any thought to "spooks," even if they hailed back to the Crusades.

All at once I heard a muffled footstep, and the organ-blower came out white and trembling ; he had heard it too. We listened ; the footsteps, evidently mailed, and with spurs on, became more and more distant, and almost died away ; but presently we heard them returning from the west end of the building ; they approached nearer and nearer, until they paused in the side chapel at the foot of the organ-loft stairs. I must say that I felt my flesh creep, and that something supernatural seemed near, but I crushed down my fears, and, lantern in hand, rushed down the stairs and saw—nothing.

A few minutes later the clash of the keys in the door announced Dr. Wesley's return ; after a short time he detected something rather strange about me, and wrung from me the unwilling confession that I had not seen, but had heard the ghost. The story lost nothing, as may be imagined, from the organ-blower, and my fellow-pupils were very much awed, and determined never to practise after nightfall in the old building.

The happy days of study and work at Gloucester passed all too quickly, and I returned to my home at Bath ; but my father was so pleased with the report that Dr. Wesley kindly wrote of me, that he promised me a chamber organ, with two and a half

octaves of radiated pedals and a nice number of stops, in the house that he had built. This organ was a great pleasure to me during the years that I remained at home, and it went with me to Devonport and was put up in our hall at the Sailors' Rest. I found that all the various subjects that I had mastered were of the greatest use in my future work, laying a substratum of health and strength that I retain to the present day, and enabling me to supervise the bands and the music that are such an attraction to the bluejackets, their wives and friends, at the Sailors' Rests.

CHAPTER IV

TRAINING FOR LIFE WORK

As I have before mentioned, my life has been lived out in the reign of our great Queen Empress. True, she has passed away for some years, and as I write I am still strong and active, and I think have years of life before me. I honour the King, who has been kindness itself to me, both as Prince of Wales, and since he has ascended the throne ; but I loved my Queen, and I love her still, and when my time comes I hope that I may be able to stand at the post of duty to the end as she did.

When God has a work to be done He trains the workers, and sometimes the training may seem long, but He never makes a mistake, and He clears the way day by day. The clouds and darkness that I have spoken of, the valley of the shadow of death through which I passed in early life, was real solid training. "I KNOW now, in whom I have believed," and I am able to sympathise with, and sometimes to help others, who are plunging through the same darkness. Other experiences that I have passed through in my younger days have been made a blessing to me in dealing with the trials and temptations that beset Jack's pathway, so that I can feel now that God by His power has made all things to work together for good and for His glory.

I am still dealing with the portion of my life running from about '61 or '62, when I was twenty-two years of age, to '73. I returned from Gloucester to our home on Lansdown. It was very dear to me for thirteen consecutive years, and it was the home to which my heart always turned when far away from it, until my mother's death in 1895.

The situation was beautiful and I must try to describe it. It stood some 700 feet above the sea, the lawn sloped away, and the ground fell rapidly, the down stretching behind it. It justified its name of "*Ensleigh*"—end of the lea—bestowed upon it, and the view from the lawn or windows on a clear summer's day is not easily described or forgotten. The ground suddenly descends, and the eye is carried over a fertile and beautiful valley to a fine range of hills, one interlocking the other—Hampton Down, Farleigh Hill with its tower, Little Solsbury, another picturesque hill, till about twenty miles off the panorama is closed by the chalk downs of Wiltshire, and the edge of Salisbury Plain, including the romantic Clay Hill, near Warminster, while far below rise the towers and roofs of the old city of Bath. The air was pure and exhilarating, and although the climb up Lansdown was stiff, we thought nothing of it in those young days. The move to the new home early in the sixties was a grand event; the grounds were prettily laid out by Sir Joseph Paxton, and contained many beautiful trees and shrubs, with kitchen garden, stables, fernery, croquet-lawn, &c.—all these added to its pleasures.

My father carried out his project of building an observatory and mounting a 9-inch reflecting

telescope, some 10 feet long, with a revolving dome and clock-work arrangements to keep the object, whether moon, or star, or planet, in the field of the telescope; his museum of geological specimens was below.

On migrating to this new house our church became St. Stephen's Church, and after some changes, the Rev. Philip Eliot, now the Very Reverend the Dean of Windsor, had the pastoral care of the church and district; it was very pleasant to us, for he was the son of an old and valued friend of my father's. He was very earnest and zealous, an excellent preacher, and good parish clergyman.

I took a class at the Beacon Hill Sunday-school at his request, and I think that I had experience in every age of childhood; beginning with the infants, I then passed on to the boys' school, where, after experience in several classes, the unmanageables began to be handed to me. I liked these unmanageables very much, and at last I had a class that I would not have exchanged for any other in the parish.

One of my fellow-teachers, who has become a life-long friend, was a Miss Walker; her father had been high in the Indian Civil Service, as it is called now. She was a true Christian of very remarkable powers and intellect, and she was a great help to me both intellectually and spiritually. Some time afterwards she married Professor C. C. Babington, Professor of Botany at Cambridge, a man combining high intellect with earnest Christianity. They were most kindly in after years, and got me up splendid meetings in Cambridge in connection with my work.

I remember them very well. One was in the Town Hall, with the Vice-Chancellor in the chair, attended by "town and gown"; the undergraduates became so interested that they got up meetings in their own rooms. I recollect one at Trinity College; the room was crowded; six sat on a sofa built for four, four sat on two chairs, others on the floor, and yet others on the window sills with their legs hanging over the quad. These meetings were conducted with great decorum, the host saying a few words, and introducing me; they listened with breathless interest and seemed never tired. Sometimes these meetings were at eight o'clock in the morning, followed by breakfast, and sometimes in the afternoon, when five o'clock tea was *de rigueur*.

My only difficulty lay in the kindness of my hospitable hosts, who insisted on my tasting all the good things on the table, from Cambridge sausages upwards. I can see their young earnest faces now, and many a clergyman I have met in various parts of the country who has reminded me of the meetings at Trinity, St. John's, Jesus, Caius, and Emmanuel Colleges. Bishop Tugwell was going over our Royal Sailors' Rest, Devonport, recently, and he mentioned that he had never forgotten one of those college meetings which he had attended, and what an inspiration it had been to him. It is a great delight to me to think that God may have spoken through my simple story to young men who were coming forward to be our statesmen, legislators, clergy, and also distinguished men in other walks of life.

Through the kindness of my uncle, the late Mr. John Bayly, of Plymouth, I was invited to take part in a

most delightful tour about the year 1871. I was a "little Englander" and never had been out of my native land, so the prospect of the journey was exhilarating indeed. The party consisted of my uncle, his brother-in-law, Mr. Windeatt, my cousin Agnes Bayly, and myself ; our luggage, by my uncle's orders, was to be limited. The route was to cross from Plymouth to Cherbourg by one of the ocean-going steamers, and then to travel first of all in Normandy. We waited at the Royal Hotel, Plymouth, for the signal that the tender would shortly put off. It was, I believe, about midnight when we stepped on board the big liner waiting for us in Plymouth Sound, and the only thing to do was to turn in.

I slept soundly after watching the Start Lighthouse sink below the horizon, and at about four or five o'clock was rather roughly aroused by being rolled out of bed on to the floor. However, it was but the Race of Alderney, and a little movement was to be expected. Thoroughly aroused, I dressed, and, after a while, went on deck ; it was a glorious scene. The sun was dancing on the water, and before us lay the splendid breakwater or Digue of Cherbourg, and the town itself stretching before us with its dockyard, building slips, houses climbing the hills, &c. Here we were transferred to another tender, and the big ship pursued her course.

Our tour in Normandy was most interesting ; we visited Rouen, Caen, Vire, Domfront, La Rochelle, and many another old place. The views of the castles interested me very much, for in the olden times a certain de Bailleul left his castle to follow Duke William to the conquest of England, while his

son, another Reginald, by following the fortunes of Duke Robert, had his castle razed to the ground for his pains. Leaving Normandy with its orchards, the Devonshire of France, and its peasants with their quaint dresses, we proceeded to Poictiers and on to Dijon. The picturesque volcanic district of Auvergne was the next halting-place—Nismes with its wonderful amphitheatre and Roman remains, Lyons, that beautiful city, and so on to Marseilles, the old port of the Phœnicians and the cradle of Christianity, and we were now on the shores of the classic Mediterranean.

I do not remember how far the railway went on, possibly to Cannes and Nice, but certainly no farther, fortunately for me. The drive from Nice to Genoa along the famous Corniche Road is seldom enjoyed now, and it is not to be matched in the world. I forget how long it took us, but it was all too short—the sea with its exquisite colour, now blue, now like a peacock's breast, beating the rocks hundreds of feet below ; the long narrow valleys up which we drove spanned by a bridge, which we crossed and drove down the other side ; the olive trees, cork trees, ilex, and hardy palm. We stopped, I think, for a night at Bordighera, where the palm trees grow well, and, passing Monte Carlo with its lovely gardens and terraces, and its hideous gambling and ruination, that blot on the Mediterranean, we went on to Mentone and thence to Genoa.

Genoa is redolent of the sea, and of the old days when the Genoese were masters of the sea, and their admirals unmatched. We stayed in the Genoese Admiralty of olden days, a palace turned into a hotel. You might "*dream that you dwelt in marble*

halls," and wake up to find the dream true, and marble staircases into the bargain.

After exploring Genoa, with its churches and all its wonders, we turned our steps once more northward, and proceeded to Milan. It was delightful to visit the picture-galleries, and to revel in the old masters, and also to see the churches, but the Cathedral, a dream in white marble, has fixed itself upon my memory, and also the view from the roof. Our next halting-place was Turin ; my memory is somewhat hazy as to Turin, although a royal palace, beautiful public gardens, churches, and picture-galleries were all duly visited ; but the following Sunday, which we spent at Susa, at the foot of the Alps, not very far from the entrance to the Mont Cenis tunnel, is photographed upon my memory. The tunnel was then making ; it took fourteen years to accomplish.

The Sunday that we spent at Susa, before crossing the Mont Cenis, was one of those glorious days more common in Italy than in England—the deep blue sky and the white clouds that sailed across it, the woods of chestnut and other trees, and the rampart of the Alps glistening with snow, will never be forgotten. The next day we crossed into Savoy, and, surrounded by the grandest views, came past the lake of Annecy to Chambery, and so on to Paris. As our tour had been greatly prolonged, our stay in Paris was short ; and, *viâ* Havre and Southampton, we were soon on terra firma in old England again, after a most delightful trip.

But I must return to earlier days. I was now no longer groping in the dark as to spiritual matters,

and afraid to utter truths that I had not realised myself ; and although feeling myself less than the least, I felt certain that God was training me for some life-work ; what it was to be, I did not know. There is an old English proverb, "*Do ye nexte thynge*," and I prayed to be shown what that next thing was, and to be able to do it.

In the early part of the year 1868, through the kind interest of the chaplain, the Rev. E. J. Wright, I received permission to visit the patients at the Bath United Hospital. It was a joy to me to take the poor fellows flowers from our garden, or the woods, with a little text tied on to each, and in the summer beautiful roses. How their faces used to light up as I came into the ward with the basket, and carried it round from bed to bed.

The chaplain arranged that I should hold a short, simple service in each ward, once a week. It consisted of prayer, reading a portion of Scripture, and giving a short address. I can see them now, some sitting near me at the table, some sitting up in bed, and others unable to move, still listening, a tear sometimes stealing over their faces. After this little service we had many a quiet talk.

One afternoon I remember, while I was conducting the service in the "Albert" ward, a poor fellow, terribly crushed by an accident in the stone quarries, was brought in. The trail of his blood lay on the floor over which he was carried, and a deep solemn hush came over us as he was laid on a bed, the screens placed round, and doctors and nurses gathered inside ; after examination they pronounced it to be a hopeless case. Hearing this, I asked the

doctor whether I might be allowed to speak to him. "Oh, yes," he said, "but you will do him no good; he will never be conscious in this world, so it doesn't matter what you say to him." Armed with this permission I sat down by his side, and, asking God for the right word, and that he should be able to hear and understand it, for he was apparently unconscious, I put my hand on his shoulder and repeated the first text that came into my mind.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

After a short pause, I repeated it again; he moved slightly, his lips quivered, and big tears rolled down his rough cheeks. This was my answer, and I felt that I could leave him, and who could say what passed between that soul and God. He died in the night without regaining more consciousness.

On another visit I found a poor fellow lying in the Edinburgh ward, near his end. He mentioned Miss Marsh, and the loving words that she had spoken to him, and he sobbed bitterly as he told me of his wife and children, whom he was about to leave. I tried to point him to the Lord Jesus Christ as the object of his faith. We were disturbed by men from the other wards trooping in to the service, but after it was over, he beckoned me to him, and said earnestly, "I've *decided* to trus. Jesus."

Dear Miss Marsh, what a blessing she has been to thousands, and what a factor in my early life. Her books, "Life of Captain Hedley Vicars, 97th Regiment," "The Life of Major Vandeleur, Royal Artillery," "English Hearts and English Hands,"

"Work among the Navvies at the Building of the Crystal Palace" — all these books stirred and helped me wonderfully. Miss Marsh has been a grand pioneer in women's work for God; I owe her a debt of gratitude not to be told, and it was a happiness to me to receive a letter, dictated by herself, not long ago. She has lived to a considerable age, and earth will be the poorer when she leaves it.

The coal-pits of Radstock and other places were not far from Bath, and are often the scenes of accidents of various kinds. One day as I went from bed to bed in the Albert Ward the cradle over one of the beds told of a fracture; the view of the man's face was blocked, but when I got to the head of the bed, a white mask, with holes for eyes, nose, and mouth, met my gaze, and the nurse told me of a sad accident. The man was a collier and had been brought in from the Radstock pits. The accident had occurred in blasting; both his legs were fractured, and his face blackened and burned by gunpowder.

As far as I could judge by his voice he seemed glad to see me, and as well as he could he said a word about his wife and little children. I went in to see him every day. He was as simple as a child, but the doctors feared that he would die of blood poisoning as one of the fractures was compound, and the wonderful antiseptic treatment in vogue at the present day was not invented. I never saw his face, but I repeated to him as we talked together a little prayer of Miss Marsh's that I often used myself, "*O God, wash me from all my sins in*

my Saviour's blood and I shall be whiter than snow. Fill me with the Holy Ghost, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

He repeated these words after me with deep feeling, and afterwards said, "I often say them to God at night when the ward is quiet." "Do you think that He hears you?" I said. "I am sure He does," he answered. The next day the nurses said that the doctor thought that he was sinking. He had been asking for me. I went up to him and took his hand. I had to bend down over the white cotton mask to hear his words. "God bless you," he said; "I'm very near death, but I'm not afraid of it now I've got Jesus." I went to see him the next day, but the sheet was drawn over his face; he had just passed away. This hospital work was a real experience to me, and I carried it on until other work claimed me.

I was asked about this time by Messrs. Drummond and Co., of Stirling, to weave any incidents into tracts and booklets; this I did, and my pen began to be enlisted in good work. Messrs. Drummond, Messrs. Partridge & Co., and the Religious Tract Society published these little books, which obtained a wide circulation, and I hope did good. I still worked away at the Sunday-school under the Rev. P. F. Eliot. The unruly classes seemed to be my lot. A strong, rough character becomes a wonderful tool in God's hand whenever guided by the Holy Spirit.

As time went on my senior boys continued to stand by me, and as they grew on to eighteen and nineteen years of age they were too old for

the school, and at Beacon Hill then we had no class-rooms.

At Mr. Eliot's wish I moved first into the vestry of St. Stephen's Church ; the class increased, married men joined, and we soon became too large for the vestry, and one of the members of the class offering his kitchen in Winifred Lane, we adjourned there, Mr. Eliot coming in to see us, and giving us every countenance and help. The kitchen was crowded, and much blessing in changed lives and homes followed these simple ministrations. The fame of it spread ; as our American friends would say, "it caught on," and a deputation of working-men waited upon me to ask whether I could not have a class nearer the parish church further down the hill. I could not give up my old friends in Winifred Lane, but the Rev. Canon Bernard, rector of the parish, kindly allowed me the use of the parish schoolroom in Guinea Lane after the school was over.

I used to go first to Winifred Lane at three o'clock, then on to Guinea Lane for a five o'clock class, eating a sandwich as I went. The schoolroom at Guinea Lane formed a good centre, and the attendance was from eighty to a hundred every Sunday. I remember our opening Sunday well. There had been frost and snow and then a thaw ; this was caught on Sunday morning with an ice grip which turned it into a sheet of glass.

Those that know Lansdown Hill will appreciate my difficulties. To get a wheeled carriage up or down was impossible, and to walk in the ordinary way, even with ice clamps, on such a hill was very difficult ; but a countryman suggested a simple remedy.

"Borrow a pair of your father's or brother's socks," he said, "and put them over your boots, and I'll guarantee that you will go and come back safe as a trivet." I followed his advice and got down safely, meeting a large body of men, and so this work prospered.

After a while, about 1868, so much had grown out of the Sunday Class—Penny Readings, which were then in vogue, Temperance Work, Prayer Meetings, &c., that the schoolroom was no longer suitable. I had a good committee of working-men around me, and with my father's consent and approval we rented a Mission Room in East Walcot that just suited us. The men helped me to fit it up, and it was opened by a large tea meeting, to which every man might bring his "missus."

It was a nice, bright, warm opening; the "missuses," if they had been hostile before, were quite won over, and expressed their approval of the work in no measured terms. "Well there, my Jim do like it; as soon as he's washed and had his tea, then he do want to go off to Miss Weston's rooms, and now I see it for myself I don't wonder." "My Bill he likes it a sight better than the public-house; he has given up the drink, and he says this is the public-house without the drink, and this is a wunnerful cup o' tea; Miss Weston do know how to make it strong and sweet." "Keeps the men in a good temper," said another woman, "and gives them something to do and to think about; we do thank you, Miss Weston, for looking after our men-folk."

All this and much more was said at our socials, when husbands and wives came together, and better

still, I have an entry in an old diary which I will transcribe: "Tuesday, May 23rd.—Had a prayer-meeting; there were only 12 men present; they prayed most earnestly for a revival in their midst, nor did they pray in vain. The result was soon apparent; many men were stirred up, a house to house visitation was proposed, and the more earnest-minded set to work to visit their fellow-workmen, and to induce them to come to the meetings."

Once again: "Wednesday, June 18th.—The meetings still continue large and earnest, prayer is offered up. God has indeed been good to us, and many a man has testified that he has given his heart to Christ." And so, with the manifest blessing of God the Holy Spirit, the work went on.

I was now fairly busy; God had opened out to me lines of work. In the Hospital, at my Mission Room, teaching in the Sunday-school, and visiting in my district, also acting frequently as honorary organist. A friend of mine, now passed to her reward, Miss Williams, of Catherine Place, Bath, took me down to her district, which was in Avon Street, a very low part, a rendezvous of tramps, gypsies, and outcasts; she had wonderful influence over these people, and she was what I was not at that time, a strong total abstainer.

She saw the terrible evil of the drink, and the need to combat it, not only by talking about it, but by taking up the cross, and denying herself a luxury, that she might set her people a good example. I did not see the necessity of such a drastic measure; I thought that I was under no temptation myself, and that the glass of wine that I took occasionally

did me good, and could do nobody any harm if they followed my example: "ifs" and "buts" are dangerous things.

My friend got up a large temperance meeting in Avon Street, and she asked me to be one of the speakers, to which I willingly consented. The room was crowded, and the meeting was bright. I spoke, proving to my own satisfaction the evils of drink, and others much more fitted than myself spoke as well. At the close of the meeting several people came up to sign the pledge; amongst others was a man, a chimney-sweeper, with plenty of marks of his profession upon him; two friends were with him, one on each side. He had without doubt been "liquoring up" to stand the ceremony.

"Our chum is going to sign the pledge," said one of his friends; "he's about sick of the drink, and he's going to give it up, aren't you, Jim?" "Yaas," answered Jim, "give me the pen." He stood for a moment balancing the pen in his hand, and, looking me straight in the face, he said in Somerset dialect, "Before I zigns, I wants to ask this lady one question. Be you a teetotaller, Miss?" This was the crucial, the leading question that had been hanging over me ever since I had worked in the good cause.

It was an awful moment; what could I do, what could I say? if only the floor would have opened and swallowed me up. But no such good luck; the audience as well as the man waited for my reply. I had to say, "No, I am not exactly a teetotaller, but I only take a glass of wine occasionally." "Right you are," answered my tormentor; "that's exactly what I do; I take a glass sometimes for the benefit of my

health." "Nonsense, Jim," said his friends, "you don't take a glass, and you don't know when to stop; give it up, man." "Nothing of the sort," he replied; "I'll do what the lady does; I shan't zign," and, throwing down the pen, he shouldered his way out of the room.

My duty was plain, which was to take up the pen and to sign my name where his would have stood, and from that day to this, by God's help, I have kept it, and hope to do so all my life through.

"I promise Thee, dear Lord, that I will never cloud the light
Which shines from Thee within my soul, and makes my reason bright:
Nor will I ever lose the power to serve Thee by my will:
Which Thou hast set within my heart Thy purpose to fulfil—
Oh let me drink as Adam drank before from Thee he fell!
Oh let me drink as Thou, dear Lord, when faint by Sychar's well,
That from my childhood pure from sin of drink and drunken strife,
By the clear fountains I may rest, of everlasting life."

This is a promise that I would that every Christian should see the way clear to make to God. I did not see it before, but at that meeting in a flash it was shown to me, and, as Frances Havergal said, "What you once see, you never can unsee." I always felt that by my inconsistency I had lost that man, and I prayed for many years that some one more faithful might win him.

At last, after a lapse of thirty years, I heard that this very man was still alive, and had become a temperance man and a Christian. I thanked God and took courage when that good news came to me.

CHAPTER V

EARLY WORK IN THE SERVICES

STEP by step I was led along into work in the great naval service of the country, a service for which I have always had a profound admiration. I think that some of the finest men of the world are to be found in the British navy, and whatever may betide, I feel that I may say, as Nelson is supposed to have done, if he could look upon the navy of the twentieth century, "*My ships are changed, my guns are changed, but the spirit of my men remains.*"

I have always been glad that my work was not laid out in narrow lines. Every one serving in the navy is welcome at the Sailors' Rests, whatever his denomination may be, whether with a creed or without one. Our religious teaching is on the simplest lines, truly interdenominational. On the same broad lines men of the sister service, the army, are welcome to use our Institutes; although, as there are Soldiers' Homes, we make no attempt to get them to come. Dockyardsmen are also on our trust-deed, but the wives, mothers, and widows of our naval men are always at home in our halls, our class-rooms, and our restaurants—all are planned for, and, as I said, all are welcome.

The work being on this broad basis, it is not

surprising that I should begin my work in the service by trying my hand at a little soldiering. The 2nd Somerset Militia assembled every year at Bath for their annual training, and in those days before the time of depôts or camps they were billeted all over the town, mostly in public-houses. The chaplain, the Rev. A. L. Dixon, was a friend of mine, and was the incumbent of a densely populated poor parish in Bath. He was very anxious that something should be done for them to allure them away from drinking places, and we projected a coffee bar, with a nice large room behind for reading, entertainments, and meetings.

An old friend of my father's, Colonel Pinney of Somerton, was colonel of the regiment, and his sister, Lady Smith, was deeply interested in everything for the good of the men. With such kind friends at headquarters, I had all the encouragement that could be desired. All my own spare cash I threw into the undertaking, and then I asked friends to help me, which they willingly did, the colonel and officers and Lady Smith giving most liberally. Suitable premises were secured, and the nice bright coffee bar, with its shining urns, coloured glasses, pictures, &c., seemed to draw the men at once.

There was a tariff, and I acted as treasurer; the takings were regularly banked, and proper accounts were kept; then the reading-room was comfortably fitted up and well supplied with papers, games, &c., also with writing-paper and envelopes, and pen and ink, free. Many a love letter and a few lines to father and mother were written there. We had popular meetings every evening in the reading-room

—songs, readings, magic lanterns, step and clog dancing by the men themselves, and everything else that we could think of to give them pleasure. I can see the men crowding in now, and filling the benches, and never moving until we closed, a grand contrast to Jack, who is somewhat mercurial in his temperament.

We had a smaller room for Bible-class and religious meetings, and they were well attended. Many of my kind friends helped me in various ways. The Sunday Bible-class, which was in the evening, I took myself, and also played the harmonium, and the testimony of the sergeants and the officers was that "now that the men had been taken in hand, and kept out of the public-houses during drinking hours, they were not like the same men." I see that one of the entries in my diary runs thus: "Monday, May 10th.—The militia reading-rooms have been crowded this evening with men, including many non-commissioned officers. I spoke to them on 'The good soldier of Jesus Christ.' Many remained behind to our prayer-meeting, and many signed the temperance pledge."

When the training closed, with the Colonel's permission I presented each man with a New Testament, and before they were disbanded they were drawn up on the parade ground, and I spoke a few words to them. Then accompanied by two sergeants carrying the baskets of books, I placed one in each man's hand. They gave me three hearty cheers for the books and all that had been done for them during the training, and also three more for all the kind friends that had helped so kindly.

When after some years I left Bath for work among the men of the navy, these coffee and reading-rooms were carried on by my sister. She had many more difficulties to contend with than I had, for the camping-out system came into vogue, and she had to follow them to Lansdown, to Claverton, to the Black Down Hills, near Taunton, and elsewhere, but she developed the work, and now that such radical changes have taken place in army and militia organisation, she has given her time to work among soldiers, mostly of the Devonport and Plymouth garrison, and the little seed that I was permitted to plant in the sixties has, by her work and example, grown into a large plant. My sister, like myself, is a voluntary worker, and is only too glad to give all her income that she can spare to her work.

These efforts among the redcoats led me to understand and appreciate some of the difficulties and trials of the army and those connected with it, and I kept in touch with many of the militiamen for some years ; a good many enlisted in the regular army and wrote to me from India and elsewhere. When the training was over and the men had left, and their letters were beginning to come to me, I was asked by a Clifton lady, Mrs. Fyffe, connected with the "Carus Wilson Soldier Work," whether I would do something in corresponding with Christian soldiers and sending them packets of nice reading every month.

This seemed to link in with my militia letter-writing, and also to give me an opening to regions beyond, so I acceded to the proposal, and a list of about a dozen men was sent to me. I wrote

away, and every month packed and sent off my parcels, and very nice letters I received from the men. I am afraid at this length of time I have not any by me that I can quote from, but the men said how thoroughly they appreciated the Christian kindness and interest shown in them when so far from home.

I went on with this letter-writing, &c., from about 1865 to 1868. All my other work went forward, and this was for a wet day and to fill in the time. Meanwhile I enjoyed my country home and garden and a good game of croquet, which was then played by old and young. My organ work was also very dear to me, and I visited Bristol Cathedral and Wells Cathedral, and as a pupil of Dr. Wesley's, with his recommendation, had no difficulty in getting full access to the organs. I remember at Wells playing a grand double chorus from Handel's oratorio, "Israel in Egypt"—"*The waters overwhelmed their enemies!*" the rolling of the waters being carried out on the pedals. After I had got about half-way through I received a hurried message, I suppose from the organist or precentor, to say that I must "stop the waters" at once, or the tremendous reverberations of the 32-foot and 16-foot pedal stops would shake all the glass out of the windows. I need not say that the rolling of the waters came to an abrupt close!

Meanwhile we were a very happy family party at our country house. My only brother was at Trinity College, Cambridge, where his father had been before him. My sister was at home, and she was, as she is now, active in good work. My father

was getting on in life, but was very vigorous, although an accident met with in falling from a ladder had robbed him of some of his activity.

Still he was always at work in one way or another. He was a great linguist, and taught himself German that he might be able to read German astronomical works. He was not quite so able to climb into the cradle and work his large telescope, but he kept himself abreast of the times, and contributed papers which were printed in the proceedings of the Royal Astronomical Society.

My mother delighted in all his pursuits, and in her garden, although she was not very strong. It was good to see the dear old people reading and strolling about together; theirs was truly the love that wears well. I used to go down to Bath every day, always walking, and after the meetings I walked up the lonely hill again, attended by my little bull-terrier dog who, with his fierce face and patch over one eye, looked the embodiment of a fighter, and was better than any policeman. No tramp or rough character would walk on the same pathway as myself and my dog, especially when they heard his low rumbling growl. I had him, however, quite under control, and he never had occasion to hurt any one.

So in this happy life my years glided along, and though I had many friends in the army, I had none in the navy.

CHAPTER VI

MY FIRST BLUEJACKET FRIEND

THE time had come when the first link of the chain was going to be forged, which was to bind me to the navy, and which was to separate me from home, and from those dear to me there. The naval link had come above water, but, like every other link, it was a part of a chain of which we cannot see the beginning or the end.

One of my soldier correspondents was ordered to India ; he wrote to me telling me that in a few days he would be at Portsmouth with his regiment to take passage in an Indian transport. I wrote him a few friendly, cheery words to Portsmouth, reminding him of that Friend who is as near to us in India as in Aldershot.

The troopship put to sea, and I expect that for a few days the soldier passengers were *hors de combat!* Still, before they arrived at Bombay *viâ* Suez, my young soldier friend had become acquainted with the sick-berth steward of H.M.S. *Crocodile*, named George Brown ; he had enlisted under this name, but he was a Pole, with all the fine characteristics of the race, and his name was George Dowkontt. However, he bore the purser's name, George Brown, while in the service, and by that name I knew him in those early days.

One day the two men were walking up and down

the deck together and the soldier said, "I say, Brown, would you like to read a letter written to me before I left England by a lady who corresponds with soldiers?" "That I should," was his reply; the letter was put into his hand, and he read it. Then turning to the soldier he said, "You redcoats seem to have kind friends who help you in the Christian life. I would give anything to have a letter like that; no one has troubled about me. Do you think that lady would write to me?"

With the enthusiasm of youth the soldier replied, "I am sure that she would; she has written to a redcoat, why not to a bluejacket?" And thus the seed was sown that has resulted in thousands of written and printed letters, exchanged with men all over the navy; and this correspondence, this golden cord of friendship, binds myself and my work to every ship in the service. Of course, with its growth, I have been obliged to associate secretaries with myself, but all letters still pass under my eye and supervision, and great numbers are replied to by my own hand.

I duly received the letter that my soldier friend promised to write about George Brown, and without having the slightest idea that this was to be my first sailor friend, the pioneer, so to say, of all that were to follow, I wrote him a letter of interest and advice. He has often, both in public and private, described the receipt of that letter. "First," he said, "I couldn't believe that it was for me, but the address was right enough, so I took it into a corner of the sick bay and read it; and I am not ashamed to say that when I saw its kind and loving words, I went down on my knees, and thanked God that He had given

me a Christian friend at last in place of my dead mother.

This event happened in April 1868. It is a very small matter, but it has been a pivot on which much has turned. In replying to George Brown I asked him if he knew any other Christian men on the East Indian station, or indeed anywhere, who would be glad of a letter from one who would be very pleased to write to them, and to help them on in the Christian life.

He sent me the names and addresses of several, and I set to work to write. It was rather difficult at first, not knowing the men at all ; but forty years ago letters travelled slowly, men's relations and friends rarely wrote to them, and the receipt of a letter on a foreign station was an event.

Many years before, when men could not write, they used to pay one of the writers from the purser's office to write for them, and I believe the cost of a letter was one shilling, so that the writer must have done well ; he would write a letter from dictation, or he would write composing himself ; he was equally happy at a love letter, a letter of sympathy and condolence, a business letter, or a letter to father or mother. If he composed, it was read aloud to the admiration of the purchaser, or sometimes of the mess.

A naval officer gave me one of these letters written by dictation during the operations in the Baltic during the Crimean war. Two men wanted each of them to write to his wife, but as they could only muster a shilling between them, they agreed to have a joint letter written to the ladies, to suit both. It

commenced, "H.M.S.—Dear Polly and Susan,—This letter comes from your loving husbands; they wish to tell you that they are well. We are thrashin' the Roosians, and mean to thrash 'em again; and when that's done, we'll get back, so no more from your loving husband Bill ——, and your loving husband Jack ——."

How the wives liked this joint letter, history does not reveal; but times have changed marvellously, and in 1868, when I first began my correspondence, I do not remember receiving any letters written by ships' writers. Very probably in this twentieth century, it would be the last way of beginning a work for God in the navy, "*the old order changeth, yielding place to the new;*" but it was very different then, and in this way my work commenced. Such links bind our sailors to their country and to friends, and are valuable not only as regards the men personally, but also in a service point of view—by weaving a few more chains between themselves and the old country. I found that my letters were gratefully received in the right spirit, and cordially responded to.

One poor fellow, serving on board a man-of-war at Rio de Janeiro, was a frequent correspondent; his letter used to come with the regularity of clockwork. At last he wrote telling of bitter disappointment; he hoped to have been returning home, but he was suddenly drafted to another ship, and had to remain out on the station for an indefinite time. "I had hoped to have seen my wife and little children soon, but it was not to be. My old ship sailed out of harbour yesterday, homeward bound; we all manned

the rigging to cheer her out; she looked splendid as she passed flying the homeward bound pennant; but I could not cheer, there was a lump in my throat. What should I do now without your letters? they drive away my trouble, and make Jesus seem very near to me. Do write to mè again; my heart is almost broke at having to stay out here—but God's will be done."

A few months passed and another letter came from him, written with a trembling hand in pencil, in which he says: "I am very ill with fever, and feel, oh! so weak; but Jesus is with me, my Saviour and my King. Something seems to tell me that I shall have to get to the other side and meet my dear ones there, and I shall meet you too." I wrote a letter in answer by the next mail, but he had already entered the haven of rest; as he said to his mates, "I'm going home by a shorter cut than by old England." My letter came back to me with one word —"Dead"—written across it, in red ink.

Month by month the correspondence with sailors grew immensely. One man written to on board any ship would send the names and ratings of other shipmates who wanted to be on the roll. Some of the naval chaplains also, hearing of the correspondence, began to take an interest in it; and among them was the late Rev. Richard Price, R.N., and several others, who kindly volunteered to procure and send me on the names of Christian men.

I was able, through the simple means of letter-writing, to make friends with hundreds of bluejackets and marines. "We never light our pipes with your letters," a sailor wrote to me, "because

you thinks about and cares for us." I did not wish to supersede, but to supplement the written letters; and I began to write a general letter every month, and to print them for distribution among the ships' companies. I have in my hand, as I write, a little volume of monthly letters written during the first year of issue, and I see that the date is May 1871.

My great desire in all letters, whether printed or written, is to speak a word to each man *alone*, and I cannot be thankful enough that I am able to do this month by month, and year by year; and ever since May 1871 to the present day, making a period of thirty-eight years, I have never missed a month; it is true that many have been written under great difficulties and in strange places—some in Switzerland during summer holidays, some on beds of sickness; some of the most difficult were written in hospital, where I lay tightly strapped on a plank bed with a compound fracture of the leg, but I had the use of my arms, and by balancing a pad above my head and writing after the fashion of a fly walking on the ceiling, I managed that letter.

I have never dictated one. I always felt that while the men cared to read them, they should go straight from my heart—I hope to theirs.

When they cease to care for them I should, as the sailors say, "pipe down," and feel that that part of my work was done. But I get so much cheer from letters from my sailor friends that I still go forward.

A man writing to me said: "I do thank God that I ever saw your *Monthly Letter*, and I must tell you about it, because it will encourage you to send them

to all my mates in the service. I was very miserable on account of bad news received from home; some one very dear to me had pitched me over, and so I determined to fling up everything and to drown my misery ashore. On my way to ask for leave I passed one of the mess tables on which lay a *Monthly Letter* just arrived by the mail; I took it up and read the text on the cover, '*There is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.*' It hit me hard, and, ashamed of myself, I turned back, and by prayer and faith sought and found that Friend who has been my all in all ever since."

A naval officer, now of high rank in the service, racily describes the advent of a packet of these letters when he was a young officer on the West Indian station. He says: "I took the parcel on the lower deck of our ship and distributed them among the ship's company.

"It was a Sunday afternoon, and they all rushed at me with 'One for me, sir! One for me!' so that I had to stand against a gun in order to keep off the crowd.

"I went round the decks half-an-hour afterwards, just to note what they were doing with them. It would have cheered your heart to have seen that sight—groups of men sitting cross-legged on the deck round one, the best reader probably, who was seated in the middle reading the letter to his listening messmates. It was a good sight indeed on board a warship on a Sunday afternoon."

As I go on with my story, I shall be telling the history of *Ashore and Afloat*, our monthly paper, which is eagerly read by the men, but that will

come in its place. I could tell stories belonging to past, present, and future times about the *Monthly Letters*, but they will find their niche as I spin the yarn of my life. God has blessed them very much, and they have spoken to hearts and consciences.

So the year 1871 ended brightly, the year of the commencement in such a small way of my work among British bluejackets. I can see as I look back that all the early training and discipline, with its joys and sorrows, was fitting me for the work planned for me; and as the years of life have sped by, I have seen in the development and success of it the Master's handiwork.

The year 1872 glided by, correspondence increasing, and men often saying that when the long commissions were over, and they returned to Portsmouth or Devonport, that they must meet me, or they should think me a myth. A few years were destined to bring very great changes to our home, but at that time all went on as usual. An interesting event to us in our small circle was the engagement of my brother to Miss Watson of Fairfield, Newbridge Hill, near Bath, which was followed by his marriage in March 1873. Meanwhile I was very busy with all my avocations, and time flew fast.

In the autumn of 1872, at a drawing-room meeting for the study of prophecy, conducted by the Rev. W. Bassett, afterwards Rector of Dulverton, I met a young lady who was to become my partner in the work that was opening before me. I remember it as if it were yesterday.

Some ladies known to me entered, bringing a friend with them, young, fair, golden-haired, the embodiment

of health and vigour. I wondered who she was, and I am afraid that I thought more of the unknown visitor that morning than of Mr. Bassett's prophetical explanations! The meeting over, the company quickly dispersed; and if I had any curiosity it was not satisfied, and the incident passed from my mind. This was in November 1872.

The New Year dawned, and with it I received many letters from my sailor friends telling me that their ships were coming to Devonport and to Portsmouth to pay off, and that they should count on meeting me, and I felt that I ought to go certainly to Devonport. I had relations in Plymouth who would, I was sure, take me in; only one event really tied me to Bath, which was my brother's marriage, and that took place in the spring.

A kind invitation came from my uncle and cousins at Plymouth inviting me to make their house my home, and another letter came, written by a lady residing at Stoke, Devonport. I did not know who this lady was, but she wrote most cordially, saying that she had heard that I was coming to Devonport for naval work, and would I address a meeting of sailors' wives in St. Aubyns Parish, and that her mother hoped that I would stay with them for as long as my work detained me.

I felt that this was a most kind invitation, coming from a stranger, and half wondered that she had the temerity to ask me. I wrote promising to lunch at her mother's house on the day on which I was to speak at the meeting for sailors' wives. Arriving, I was shown into the drawing-room, and in a moment a young lady entered. I was amazed; I had pictured

an elderly and rather severe person, and here was the very reverse, all youth, brightness, and smiles; and to crown all, this was the very same lady that I had met at the class at Bath, when my thoughts strayed somewhat from our prophetical studies.

We became friends at once, and have continued friends ever since, although thirty-six years have passed over our heads. There is a very grave suspicion, especially among members of the opposite sex, that women cannot remain friends for any length of time; they are sure to quarrel and part.

The late Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, formerly H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, when he was Admiral Commander-in-Chief at Devonport, during 1890–92, said, "One thing amazes me about yourself and Miss Wintz—you have been close friends and working together all these years, and have not quarrelled and parted yet." "No sir," I said, "I think there is no fear of it; it takes two to manage such a work as this, and we each have our own department." "True," he said, "but it is splendid, two women rowing in one boat all these years, and never capsizing her." How can we account for these things? In no way, except by the power and will of God.

Miss Wintz came of a most interesting family; her father was a Swiss gentleman of high standing, and his estates were on the Rhine, just below the Falls of Schaffhausen. He was President of his Canton, and held many high offices. The visit of a young English lady to Switzerland turned his thoughts away from mountains and glaciers to the little island in the Northern Sea; and such is the magnetic power of love that, although in those days

travelling was by diligence or on horseback, he came to England to search for the lady who had captivated him without knowing her whereabouts. How he found her under such difficulties is remarkable ; and how, when found, she was persuaded to leave home, relations, and country to follow the man of her choice to far-off Switzerland is a romance indeed.

But so it was ; and in the old Château, with its vineyards, terraced gardens and park, the roar of the Falls resounding through the clear Swiss air, several children were born, and the youngest but one, Sophia Gertrude Wintz, a bonnie fair-haired lassie, has lived a life interwoven with mine, and but for her our work would never have been what it is.

The life in the old Château must have been very delightful indeed for the little people ; the Alps, white and glistering, could be seen from their terrace in clear weather. The Rhine comes round in a lovely swift bend, the waters clear and green, with the glacier tint from Lake Constance ; the rushing of the waters, the snow-white foam, the rainbows playing about it, the rocky island that cleaves it in the middle, and the solemn thunderous roar of the waters, can never be forgotten by those who have seen and heard it. Mr. Wintz was the possessor of the property on the Schaffhausen side, and also of the ferry across the river. The Château of Laufen, their nearest neighbour's house, stands opposite.

The Wintz's are a very old family, and derived their name and origin from the Castle of Winzenau, near the town of Olten, on the river Aar, in Switzerland.

In the year 1148 they were the founders and patrons of the Monastery of St. Urban (Canton Aarau). The first of the names of whom we have a clear record was Berchtold de Winze, who fought in the famous battle of Morgarten in 1315, against the Austrians, the result of which was most disastrous to him, his castles and estates being confiscated, and becoming the property of the town of Solothurn.

Through the help of a nobleman, Ulrich von Clingen, whose castle was situated not far from Winzenau, he was made Abbot and free citizen of Stein, near Schaffhausen, and once more planted his family in their old possessions. From him was descended John Conrad Wintz, who married Marie Magdalene de Wald-Kirch, a lady of noble birth. His estate was beautifully situated over the Falls of the Rhine, with a town residence in Schaffhausen. After the death of Miss Wintz's father the property was sold.

I shall never forget paying a visit with Miss Wintz to the old home. A large hotel has been built in the grounds, but there is the old Château. We stood on the terrace, where she had so often romped as a child, and attended divine service in the large salon, conducted by the Rev. Canon Morse of Bristol; we received the Holy Communion under her old roof-tree, and we rambled through the vineyards, running down to the Rhine; we crossed by the ferry to get under the Falls, and when the name was mentioned, the peasants would take nothing, but rejoiced in seeing a member of the family of the old Seigneur.

The family left Schaffhausen for the education of the children, specially of the eldest son, at Heidel-

berg University, but his career was cut short by fever, and then the mother's heart longed for her native land, and, once rooted there, Switzerland faded away: not so to the father, the *mal-de-pays* was strong with him, and he could not rest unless he could breathe the Swiss air every autumn.

Miss Wintz was sent to school, and in due time took her place in the gay world. She came of a naval family; her great-uncle, by marriage, Admiral Sir Lewis Jones, G.C.B., was the *doyen* of the British navy. Her only brother entered the naval service, and is now Admiral Lewis Wintz. She has also cousins, and other relatives, officers of high standing in the army and navy.

On leaving school it was small wonder that the young girl rejoiced in a life of gaiety, which she tasted to the full; but that life with all its charms did not satisfy her. Balls, races, theatricals were soon shorn of their first delight, but still in the very bloom of life and youth the claims of the real King of Life, the Saviour, were brought before her, and all her society engagements were given up for a service that was infinitely better. She too felt that she was capable of definite work, and she asked God to guide her to it. That same year we met and commenced our joint work together, which has continued ever since, and will continue, we believe, through eternity.

CHAPTER VII

OUR BOYS IN BLUE

I HAVE always thought that one of the best points about this work was that I was able to begin with the boys. In 1873, when I first went to Devonport, two, or, to speak more correctly, four old ships were used as training ships for the Royal Navy. These were H.M.S. *Impregnable*, *Implacable*, *Lion*, and *Foudroyant*, or, as the boys facetiously called her, "Food I want," and were lying in Hamoaze. I suppose that with the old *Circe* receiving hulk some 4000 boys would have been in training at the same time. H.M.S. *St. Vincent* lay at Portsmouth, H.M.S. *Ganges* at Falmouth, and H.M.S. *Boscawen* at Portland.

Of course this was somewhat altered afterwards, and now the principal training establishment is at Shotley, near Harwich, and the training ships at the ports are mostly abolished ; but we still have H.M.S. *Impregnable* at Devonport, and although weird tales come to me sometimes that she will depart, I cling to her, and do all that I can for the fine young fellows on board ; but during the early part of my work I was able to work a great deal among the boys, especially at Devonport.

During the first year, while staying at Mrs. Wintz's house, Miss Wintz and myself began to plan what we could do for these boys. We had no Sailors'

Rest in those days, but every Sunday afternoon hundreds of them were strolling aimlessly about the town, no door opened to them, except the doors of the public-houses, and it was against the regulations for them to go into them. I consulted some naval officers, and they were not very cheering.

"You'll never catch the boys; they like a run ashore to stretch their legs, and they won't come to you, or any one."

However, I was determined to try. I took the Mechanics' Institute, not a very lively-looking place, I must say; I hoped that a basket of buns might pave the way, but the buns failed utterly; the boys looked in, and fled.

What was to be done? Here Mrs. Wintz came forward most kindly, and she offered her large kitchen every Sunday afternoon; possibly that might draw them, and it did draw; the very word "kitchen" spelt comfort and home. I can see the boys cramming the kitchen, sitting on the floor and window-sills when the benches were full, and some on the kitchen stove with its cold plate.

How the boys sang! We read the Bible together, and talked about it, and had plenty of singing, and each boy at first took away a bun with him, but after a few Sundays the kitchen seemed a sufficient draw without the buns, and they were abandoned.

And what friendships I made; they last to this day, and many bright fellows are safely moored in the heavenly port. One of my earnest helpers was a curly-haired lad of about seventeen. He was a typical British bluejacket, bright and sunny, and an earnest Christian. "I'll help you," he said to

me in the times of the kitchen meetings; "I'll go out into the park and streets and fetch them in; I'll be your recruiting sergeant." True to his word, he would fetch them in, and would come up the garden walk with a dozen or so boys following him, like the tail of a comet, and when the room was full he was satisfied.

One day he said to me, "I'm so sorry, but I'm drafted for sea. I'm going this week to the *Triumph;* I shall miss those happy Sunday afternoons." I reminded him of the presence of Christ everywhere with us. "Yes," he said, "that's true; it's my only comfort. He will help me to stand up for Him, and not to be ashamed of my colours."

We had some prayer together, and he went away saying, "The *Triumph* will be here again in six months, and when she drops her anchor in Plymouth Sound, I shall be up to the meeting like a shot."

Dear fellow, about three months after the ship left, I had a letter from his Captain, Captain H. D. Grant, R.N., and he said: "We have had one of your boys on board, Arthur Phillips; he was a splendid seaman, had just been rated, and the Commander said, 'one of the best royal yard'smen he ever had.' His influence on board was remarkable; the men would stop swearing when he was near, because they said it hurt him so. He was never ashamed to kneel down under his hammock for prayer, before the hands turned in.

"The other day after dinner, when the men mustered for divisions, he was missing; I ordered the ship to be searched, and presently from below came a hail, 'We've found him, sir.' I hurried

below, and there in the chain locker where he had fallen, his little Testament beside him, was Phillips; a man's arm was round his neck, and as the lantern shone on his face, he looked in a calm and holy sleep.

"There was no mystery about his death; he had gone on the orlop deck during dinner for reading and for prayer as usual, one of the chain lockers had accidentally been left open, and in the darkness he had stepped into it and death was instantaneous. No mark was on his body, not a bone broken; it was simply the shock, and the face was calm in death."

When I visited Bebington Cemetery, near Rockferry, some years later, the sexton told me that he never could forget that funeral—only a young seaman, but he was followed by his Captain and all the officers and ship's company. The Captain spoke so earnestly there was scarcely a dry eye among themselves and the hundreds of people who crowded the cemetery. The sexton led me to the grave, nicely kept by himself, and on the tablet that his shipmates had paid for I read these words:

In Memory of
ARTHUR PHILLIPS
Seaman of H.M.S. *Triumph*
Aged 18 Years

Who was killed by an accidental fall on board the said ship on the 16th July 1874 during the visit of the Channel Squadron to Liverpool.

His remains are interred near this spot, and this memorial is erected by his shipmates to testify their esteem for the consistent Christian conduct he always manifested.

"*Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.*"

On a bright summer day in 1873 I stood for the first time upon the quarter-deck of a man-of-war, with the white ensign gleaming in the sunlight, as it floated over the stern, an emblem of England's naval power.

The Captain had sent his galley to the officers' steps in the dockyard, and I was received with tossed oars, and with "Give way there" by the steersman. I was rapidly rowed alongside H.M.S. *Impregnable.* Just before we came alongside a shrill whistle was heard, and the side boys rushed down the companion, each holding out the silken cord by which I was to step on the grating. At the head of the ladder I was met by the Captain and officers, and was warmly welcomed on board. It was decided that the boys should be mustered on the quarter-deck, while we ourselves stood upon the poop of the old three-decker. The sea of faces was a grand sight indeed. Captain Wilson, V.C., introduced me to the boys in a few manly words, and then the way was open to me to speak to them.

If ever I had strength from above, I had it on that day. I was quite inexperienced, but all listened with the greatest attention, and the only disturbing elements were the hoarse cry of the sea-gulls as they circled round, and the wind in the rigging. When the boys laughed it looked like a burst of sunshine sweeping over a cornfield on a summer day.

After I had finished, a vote of thanks proposed and carried, and caps replaced, I asked the Captain "whether any boy wishing it might join the Royal Naval Temperance Society?" "Certainly," he said,

"and I shall honour the boy that makes such a stand." Two hundred and twenty-five lads signed the temperance pledge on that day, and I returned from the ship to carry the photograph of that meeting always with me.

The *National Temperance League* had taken up temperance work in the navy, which had been started years before on board H.M.S. *Reindeer* by the men themselves. A splendid inaugural meeting was held at Devonport, April 28, 1873. It was presided over by the Lord Bishop of the diocese, Dr. Temple, who was supported by Admiral Sir William King Hall, Admiral-Superintendent, Captain Herbert, H.M.S. *Cambridge*, Captain Wilson, H.M.S. *Impregnable*, Captain Bridge, H.M.S. *Implacable*, and a large number of naval officers, bluejackets, marines, the local clergy, and the general public. The hall was crammed to the doors. This meeting was to start temperance work in the navy, and at the request of the *National Temperance League* I gladly promised to do all I could.

A valued agent of the League, Mr. Samuel Sims, remained to organise meetings on board ship. But this was a very difficult matter, as meetings on board ship, unless presided over by the Captain, or the chaplain, were against the Queen's regulations, and I was looked upon with great terror and suspicion by commanding officers. "What can I do, sir?" one of them said to Admiral Sir William King Hall. "If she were a man, and said anything against the regulations, I could march her over the side, escorted by a file of marines, but I can do nothing to a lady."

The kind Admiral, himself a teetotaller of long standing, was puzzled. He could see nothing but good in the movement, but he knew full well that the etiquette and rules of the service, as well as a strong prejudice, were all against it.

He agreed to be surety, on condition that I would give a short address to the dockyardsmen at their dinner hour, at which both himself and his chaplain would be present. That meeting was held, and both the Admiral and chaplain were satisfied, and the word was passed to all the ships in the harbour, "Don't be afraid to let Miss Weston come on board, and speak to your ship's company; I'll stand security for her," and brave Captain Wilson of H.M.S. *Impregnable*, who had won the Victoria Cross, was characteristically the first to let me in.

There are certain peculiarities about the navy that remain to this day. One is that if you are outside, they will never let you get inside; and another is, that if you once get inside and establish a precedent, no one will be allowed to despoil you of it, if the fight is to the death.

Mr. Sims, cheered and encouraged, continued his organising work, visiting ship after ship to ask the Captain to allow me to speak to the ship's company, and he succeeded so well that, during the year 1873, I paid visits to thirty-eight ships of the Royal Navy and Government establishments, and took some sixteen hundred pledges, and formed a great many branches; but to me, perhaps, the most interesting event was a meeting got up at Portsmouth by my first bluejacket friend, Mr. Dowkontt, formerly known to me as Mr. George Brown, of H.M.S. *Crocodile*.

The meeting was crowded by bronzed bluejackets, who had been my correspondents for some years past. They seemed to have expected that I should appear as a very old lady, but when they saw me strong and vigorous they cheered again and again, until the roof re-echoed.

It was a joy to grasp them by the hand and to hear them say that this was the day that they had looked forward to for years, one of the happiest in their lives. I heard many stories that night, both of written and printed letters, that made me thank God indeed. "I have been looking forward to this day for years," said a marine, as he came up with beaming face to be spoken to, "and to tell you what a blessing those letters were to me."

We riveted personal friendships that evening that have never grown cold, notably that with Mr., later Dr., Dowkontt. He did good work at the surgery, speaking to the dockyardsmen and others carried in injured, and visiting them at their homes. When his term of service was over, he went to Liverpool as a worker in the Medical Mission, but his talents were so great that, by the help of some wealthy Liverpool gentlemen, he was sent to America to study for the medical profession.

This he did most efficiently, and passed his exams so well that he graduated as Doctor of Medicine. I received a post-card from him in which he told me of the happy event, and said: "Does it not seem wonderful that a bluejacket serving on the lower deck of the British navy not long ago should be able to write M.D. after his name?" He has since done splendid work in connection with the Medical

Missions. I have just heard that this old friend has passed away to his reward.

During 1873, besides all the work on board our ships of war, I was able to go to London to stay with a friend who became afterwards one of our trustees—Miss Mason, of the "House of Rest for Christian Workers," then situated at Kilburn, now in St. John's Wood. It was a wonderful work, and it is so now, preaching a sermon every day to those that will listen on the text "*Have faith in God.*" Miss Mason looks to God, as Mr. Müller of the Bristol Orphanage did, to supply her needs, in answer to prayer and faith: and the answers were most striking. There would be no food in the house, and either food would come in or money. The rent would be due. I have heard earnest prayer offered for money to pay that rent, and I have seen that money come in, oftentimes a larger sum than had been asked for.

As we returned towards the West of England, I took Miss Wintz to my home at Bath to introduce her to my father and mother, after which she was to go to Plymouth, and I was to remain at Lansdown. Both our homes were cemented together by mutual friendship, and the companionship of such a friend reconciled my father wonderfully to my pursuing a work that must naturally take me from home.

I little knew all that my parents went through in coming to the decision that they would give me up for God's service. I have found out since that it was a real surrender to them, but they made the sacrifice willingly, and when, a year later, I stood by

my father's coffin, I felt thankful indeed that I always had his consent and blessing on my work.

The year 1874 was a year long to be remembered; a house in Fore Street, Devonport, now part of the site on which the Royal Sailors' Rest stands, was secured. I was able to visit a large number of ships that year, and to speak to hundreds of men. Apropos of ship visiting, I must tell one story that, although it has been told before, is, I think, worth telling again.

H.M.S. *Topaze*, of what we used to call the "Gem" class, was being repaired in the Devonport Dockyard. Her guns had been removed, and she was evidently within "stone walls" for some time. The Captain of the ship invited me on board, and the men were mustered on the main deck; they listened very attentively, and many a one looked touched.

When I had finished speaking I asked the Captain, "Whether any men that wished it might join the Royal Naval Temperance Society?" He gave a cordial assent, and my eyes roved round to see on what place I could put the pledge-book. I have often used a gun, but as I have said, they were gone. "Could I have a little table for my book?" I whispered to the Captain. "Yes," he replied, "anything in the world. I'll send to my cabin for a table."

He did so, but the table seemed long in coming, and the men inclined to melt away. I cast another despairing glance around, and I saw what I thought to be a bread tub standing not far off. "Could I have that bread tub?" I asked; "it would make a

nice little table turned over." I saw the Captain smile and tug at his moustache, and the men seemed on the brink of bursting into laughter. "Yes," he answered, "anything that we have is at your command. Here, men, a couple of hands roll over that grog-tub."

The secret was out; I had asked for the grog-tub from which the rum and water was served for the daily ration. If the tub could have rebelled no doubt he would have done so, but discipline is strict on a ship of war, and he was laid on his side amidst loud cheers, rolled down the deck, and placed before me, making a very good table.

More than sixty men enrolled their names there and then, and one young sailor, after signing, laid down his pen and, significantly tapping the tub with his knuckles, said, "There goes a nail in your coffin, old fellow." The Captain took up the book when the last had joined, and, running his eye down the lists significantly, added, "Sixty odd nails to-day, and if they all hold firm I won't give much for the old grog-tub's life."

I am glad to report that these nails held extremely well, and twenty years later, when I was speaking in the neighbourhood of London, and told this story, I heard a little noise in the gallery, and a tall man stood up and said—

"I am a nail that's held firm; I was a youngster then, and since that time I've married the sweetest wife in England and have three little children. There's no drink in my home; all are helping me to stand firm; as the Captain said that day, it was a good day for me and mine." I often had, as the men say,

to rough it, going off in very stormy weather to Spithead or to the *Ganges* at Falmouth, sometimes speaking on board a gunboat rolling very considerably; but I was a fair sailor, and if it was possible to send for me I felt in honour bound to go.

I remember once going to speak to the ship's company on board the *Thalia*. She was lying in Plymouth Sound, about to leave for foreign service. I went down to the Mount Wise steps, at Devonport, and the boat was soon alongside in charge of a midshipman. The wind had risen considerably, and had shifted since they had left the ship, and I saw that the coxswain looked rather anxious; but the midshipman was very full of courage; he took the tiller and we began to leave the shore behind. He then gave orders for sailing; the coxswain whispered to him, but he replied, "It's all right, only a capful of wind."

If a capful, it was a very large one. We began to run before it, but on rounding a point of land it was upon us in all its fury. The midshipman looked frightened, but the coxswain and others managed to furl the sail, and we were rocking away over a dangerous reef in the Sound known as the Devil's Bridge. Here my career, and probably that of others in the boat, nearly came to an end; we were in imminent danger. The officer of the watch on board H.M.S. *Thalia* saw the peril, thought that we should be lost, and instantly sent to our assistance.

How long we should have remained afloat I do not know, but the steam launch came down upon us from the ship and took us in tow, and after a little

time I was on her deck; I had been an hour and a half coming that short distance. The midshipman was severely admonished, and I held my meeting, returning ashore in a steam launch, which was safe, but lively.

Sorrow sometimes bursts upon us like "a bolt from the blue." I had been at home, my father well and bright, enlarging his house, full of energy and life. I went away to Chatham, and was returning to Portsmouth for work there. It was a brilliant June day, the country between Guildford and Havant looked lovely. Reaching Portsmouth, I went to Southsea to stay with an old friend, intending to go across the water to speak to the men at Haslar Hospital that evening.

As I came downstairs to tea a telegram was placed in my hand, which I carelessly tore open, and as I glanced over it I was turned to stone. It was from my brother—"*Our father died this morning, will you come home at once.*" I could scarcely believe it, and yet there were the terrible words. How I got home I hardly know; in those days of slower railway travelling I could get no farther than Salisbury that day. I remember pacing my room at the hotel all through the night in an agony of grief, almost despair, but at the same time I never realised the loving presence of God more than in that hour of darkness.

The next morning, by the first train, I got to Bath, and soon entered the darkened house where my father lay still in death. He was busy and active as ever until the last moment, when, through failure of the heart's action, life became extinct. It was a

translation for one who, like himself, was ready, through simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to meet his God.

My dear mother told me how, on the very morning of his death, he was reading her a letter that I had written to him telling him of all that was being done, and said "how rejoiced he was to feel that they had placed no impediment in my way to do the work to which God had evidently called me." How little I thought, as he stood on the doorstep to wish me good speed when I left my home for the last time before his death, that we should see each other no more until we should meet in the presence of our Lord.

After my father had been laid to rest in Lansdown Cemetery, my mother being surrounded by a family circle—my sister, my brother, his wife and baby son —the way was open again for my work among the sailors and their families, and I returned to Devonport to visit Miss Wintz; she meanwhile had carried on the sailor boys' work at her mother's house, and she wrote to tell me that the only difficulty was that the boys were too many for the kitchen, and she asked me to return as soon as possible that some move might be decided on.

A remembrance flashed through my mind of a prayer that I had heard from the lips of Arthur Phillips months before, something to this effect: "*O Lord, help me to bring the boys up, and do them good when they come, and grant that this kitchen may be crowded out, and that we may have to get another room, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*" That prayer was about to be answered.

I travelled to Devonport and found the kitchen full—window-sill, stove, and all, and the boys were out on the lawn; they looked like a swarm of bees, and the buns had long ceased. We went down into Devonport, and, after much searching and inquiry, found a large furniture store and auction-room which could be had for Sunday work, and which would hold some hundreds. This was soon secured, seats and forms hired, a nice harmonium purchased, and a band of workers, mostly dockyardsmen and service people, and some of their wives, gathered round me to help in getting the boys in from the street, in the singing, and in other ways.

Thus provided for I set forward with renewed energy. The boys crowded in, and where I had tens before, I had hundreds now. The singing was hearty and continuous, and took up the vocal strength of all my helpers. Sailor boys are proverbially restless and mercurial; the characteristic runs through the service. Our difficulty was to keep them quiet to listen to any address, and when friends had been specially invited to speak to them the result was, to say the least, trying.

I will give a leaf out of one of my own experiences. A large number of boys, some three or four hundred, were assembled one Sunday afternoon. We had been singing a great deal, and I was to speak to them. Whether I looked dull, or turned over the pages of my Bible, I do not know; either would have been fatal to the sailor boys. In a moment a movement began, boy looked at boy, and then, in a twinkling, over the benches and

under the benches, with marvellous agility, they made for the door and were out in the street.

I was taken aback; the two front rows of boys were left, being, I suppose, unable to execute the flank movement quickly enough. The least that I could do was to try to retain the few left. This, by an anecdote which arrested their attention, I succeeded in doing, more boys came into the hall, and we filled up once more; but the lesson taught me was never forgotten—not only first to catch your hare, but to keep him when caught.

This work among the boys has been continued ever since. Some two millions have passed through my hands in thirty-four or thirty-five years, and although, as I have said, the training service has been altered, and removed principally to Shotley, near Harwich, still we do good work at Devonport, the place in which we started these meetings; and, as I write, a draft tea-party of boys leaving the training service for commissioned ships, about two hundred and sixty strong, is filling our beautiful new hall, and listening to parting words.

I have just received a letter from a man who has risen high in the service, and that is only one out of hundreds. He says: "I've known you for a very long time; I was a boy in the training-ship *Lion*, at Devonport, when you opened the little Rest there in Fore Street. I've just left a ship at Devonport, where I was bandmaster for two years, and I enjoyed to the full the benefits provided at the palatial building that stands there now—thanks to the untiring efforts of yourself and Miss Wintz.

"I am going to the training establishment at

Shotley, and I hope at some time to see your cheery face among the boys, as I have done on board the *Impregnable* at Devonport and the *Agincourt* at Portland in past times, and I sincerely hope that you and Miss Wintz will be spared to us for many years yet; the navy will never have such another 'Mother' as your dear self. Hoping you will excuse the liberty, I remain faithfully yours, E. C. B."

CHAPTER VIII

THE REQUEST OF THE BLUEJACKETS, AND WHAT CAME OF IT

THE year 1874 was remarkable in my reminiscences, from the fact that it led to a new departure such as I must confess that I never contemplated. A deputation from a gunboat, H.M.S. *Dryad*, asked for an interview with me, as they had something important to lay before me. I knew that we had a good work in the *Dryad* during her commission—many temperance and Christian men in the ship's company—and I was glad to receive the deputation, and to hear what they had to say. I was staying with Mrs. Wintz at Stoke, Devonport, and I received the party in her drawing-room. They were fine-looking men, seamen of the olden type.

A chief petty officer was the spokesman. His request, earnestly backed up by the rest of the ship's company, was that I should open a temperance house for bluejackets close to the dockyard gates, to which they could resort, and from which intoxicating drinks would be excluded. They were certain that it would be a help to thousands. To be sure it would cost money, and Miss Wintz and myself would have to be there, and to look after it; but we had done so much for sailors that we were, they thought, sure to do this.

To their great grief I hesitated, and said that we would think of it. I prayed about it, and the more I looked at it the worse it seemed. The money would be difficult to get; and even supposing that I could get such a place and fit it up, and open it, then the tremendous responsibilities of "looking after it," as the bluejackets called it, would begin, and that would involve a lifetime of work, and, in those days, certainly of entire self-abnegation; for such a departure was quite out of the then received code as to woman's work.

That was the one side; on the other was the simple desire to spend my life in His service, who had given His life for me. And what was my self-abnegation compared to His, "*Who made Himself of no reputation.*" I am thankful to say that this line of thought prevailed over all else, and it prevails now.

Our friends on board the *Dryad* were greatly delighted to hear that they, with others, should have a "public-house without the drink" as soon as I could get it, and that I would, as they wished, manage it with Miss Wintz. I began quietly looking about, and at last heard of a house that might be had, once a large grocery store, and, later, a co-operative store. It stood at the bottom of Fore Street, close to the dockyard gates, and right among public-houses, or, as men called them in those days, "grog-shops." I scarcely knew what to do next. If the house was to be secured, it must be done at once. I had had no time yet to lay the matter before the public.

I solved the question by taking it for a year, out of my private resources, with option of purchase at the close. I am quite sure that if God had not given

me faith to believe that this was His work, and that He would open the way and provide the means, I could not have taken the steps that I did. It may seem chimerical and almost fanatical to some, but it was very real to me ; and I felt that if I was unsuccessful in raising the money to fit up the place, that I would be willing to give it up at the end of the year.

I then wrote to one or two of the religious and temperance papers, notably the *Christian*, telling them the story as far as it went, and offering to receive any money sent, and to spend it for this purpose. The late R. C. Morgan, Esq., the editor of the *Christian*, was much interested in my project, and through his instrumentality a gentleman, whose name I did not know, offered to add £5 to every £100 collected. This was a great spur, and my hopes began to rise as to the purchase of the house. The money came in steadily, not in any large sums, but just as God pleased, and all that I had to do was to thank Him for it, and to spend it faithfully.

I remember very well, one day in October 1874, going to the old house with a friend of mine, now Rev. Canon Head of Clifton, showing it to him, and explaining what I meant to do as to coffee-bar, reading-rooms, class-rooms, sleeping accommodation, small hall, &c., &c. We were standing in one of the dusty cobwebby rooms, when Canon Head said, "Shall we just ask God about it?" We kneeled down, and he prayed very earnestly "that God would give us His guidance in all, even in the smallest things, that the money might come, that we might open the place at the right time free of debt, and that it might be a great blessing to the bluejackets."

That prayer has been answered clause by clause. I felt then, and I feel now, that God has guided, and is guiding me. Wealthy corporations, titled people, and millionaires might do great things; but that two weak women should have been able to do such a work as this for so many years, must surely convince the most sceptical of the power of God.

Miss Wintz has great gifts in planning, organisation, and fitting up, so as the money came in we had estimates got out, and were backwards and forwards every day, and often twice a day, from Stoke to Devonport, to supervise everything. By degrees the old shop was turned into a bright comfortable restaurant.

The kitchen was upstairs, connected by lift and speaking tubes; the reading-room, large and spacious, was on the first floor, and it had to do for a recreation-room and smoking-room as well; at the back of the house we turned an old coal-shed into a small hall; and going down a few steps, and across a little garden, were two cottages, which provided the sleeping accommodation.

True to our promise, we fitted up two small tenement rooms for our own use. Our friends were horrified, and declared that we should be dead in a year if we were mad enough to live there. We were living and boarding at our own expense, and not taking anything whatever from the work; all our services were free, and always have been, spite of an idea which makes one smile—that we were lining our pockets.

But as to the healthiness of the rooms not much can be said. They were low and confined, and woefully

deficient in oxygen ; but we did not wish to take good rooms from the men, so we stayed where we were, and did our best.

However, the laws of health cannot be broken, and before we had lived six months there Miss Wintz was down with blood poisoning, and I was very much knocked up, so we gave up the rooms ; but we did not break our promise to the bluejackets that we would live on the premises and manage things, for we were able to get other quarters as the buildings enlarged, and with rooms of our own in the country, health and strength returned.

Yes, 1875 and 1876 were busy years ; the work was shaping out, and when the year '75 closed I had enough money to purchase the house in Fore Street, and other premises around it.

From the first receipt of public money I felt that I must be very careful as to account-keeping, and acknowledgment of all moneys received. For this work a gentleman came to help me in 1875 ; he was a young man then, but an expert financier. He has kept our books ever since, and is keeping them now. Mr. Arthur C. Uren is a true and valued friend, and has proved it by thirty-four years' continuous service.

The Subscription Lists and Balance Sheets, duly audited by professional accountants, were published every year ; we have them from the earliest date. The books are now in the hands of *Messrs. Knox, Cropper and Co.*, Chartered Accountants, 16 Finsbury Circus, London, for auditing ; they are ready to answer any reasonable questions as to our finances. I merely mention this to show that I was fully alive to the danger of being the recipient of public money, and

anxious to do all in my power to guard against misconception.

Alterations and improvements went on until the old house became completely transmogrified; the shop made a very cosy restaurant, with the "settles," as they were called, characteristic of the times, and I had bright colours, mirrors, and a little gilding, for I was competing against public-houses.

When the date for the opening drew near, a question arose as to whether some distinguished person should be asked to perform the ceremony; but I felt that the work was altogether in such an early stage, and so tentative, that a flourish of trumpets would be unsuitable, so I decided to have a meeting of thanksgiving to God on Sunday night, May 7th, and on Monday, May 8th, to throw open the doors at five o'clock, which was then and has been ever since the hour of opening.

On the Sunday evening three bluejackets who had formed a part of a very large and bright gathering in our hall asked to see me; they said they had been watching the building fitting up for months, and that they had one wish, and that was that they should be the first "birds to roost there."

As they cannily remarked, it would be of no use to wait till the morrow, as every bed was engaged. I made some remark to the effect "that it would scarcely do, as the place was not opened." "Couldn't you throw the red tape overboard for once, Miss Weston?" they all three exclaimed; "we've got special leave from our Captain on purpose to sleep here to-night."

I need not say that the red tape was thrown overboard, and when the attendant who had shown

them their room returned, he said, "We've got three birds of the right sort here to begin with; when I showed them their room they shut the door, and in a minute I heard one of them reading; I listened; it was from the Bible, and then they knelt down and prayed." A few days later they brought me their photos taken in a group, entitled "The first birds to roost at the Sailors' Rest."

Monday, 8th May 1876, dawned bright and beautiful, the servants and ourselves were up with the lark. But the coffee was just hot, and the bread and butter and cakes scarcely cut, before there was a loud knocking outside, the doors swung back, and in they came with a rush, and for an hour the popular saying was true, that "one might have walked upon the men's heads"—sailors just going to catch their boats, dockyardsmen going to their work in the yard, policemen come in from their night's round, all glad to get a cup of hot tea, coffee, or cocoa, and a roll or cake, and during the day there was but little cessation from the stir and bustle of the morning. All classes, especially those employed by the Government, came to buy, to eat, and to drink.

I felt very strongly that there was one important point to be attained. Jack is proverbially a "shy bird," and is apt to give a very wide berth to any place where he thinks that he will be preached at, or made a teetotaller. The problem was difficult, but it had to be solved; he must be free to come and go as he liked, whether he was sober or drunk, whether he had a creed or no creed. As long as he belonged to the navy that was sufficient; our

platform was broad, no one was to attack him in any way; if meetings were going on, he was free to attend them or stay away. There was no subscribing membership; if he was a bluejacket of our navy, or any other navy, or a merchant seaman, the place was free to him; all that he paid for was his food, bed, or bath.

I resolved that the place should stand on its own feet, that, apart from building, no subscription money should be put to it, so that it should be in no sense a charity, but a self-respecting Institute, paying its own way; and if after all expenses were paid, and all depreciations written off, there should be a surplus, it should be devoted to the relief and help of widows, orphans, mothers, invalided men, temperance, building, and any other good work at the discretion of the trustees.

The work, whether at Devonport or Portsmouth, consists of two departments, but both linked together. The Hall, with its evangelistic work, Bible-classes, gatherings for sailors' wives and children, temperance, and other social meetings; and the Institute, with its refreshment bar, dormitories, baths, smoking, dining, reading rooms, billiard room, &c., the two departments to be kept distinct, and yet united; conveniently near, and yet not interfering with each other. This line of action I have carried through all my life, and it has been eminently successful; all the subscriptions kindly sent go to my work at home and abroad, or to our building fund.

We had not been open very long when I found that I needed more sleeping accommodation, and having paid all the money owing for the Sailors'

Rest, I was able to go a step further, and to build a tall block of dormitories on the garden behind our Hall. It was good to see the men stream in directly they came ashore, all bright, cheery, and happy; later in the evening some of them were too cheery, but our people, having been navy men themselves, were very patient with them. The police, too, used to bring men in that they found about in the streets, unable to take care of themselves.

On one very wet night I was in the coffee-bar when a bluejacket came in, carrying on his back a large bundle wrapped up in an oil-skin; it might have been a sack of wheat. He went into the reading-room and deposited it on a couch, and, rejoining me, said, "I've had a stiff job to-night, but I'm glad that I brought him back." Who the "him" was I could not understand, until he continued, "he's safe on the couch now."

"Was the load you carried one of your shipmates?" I asked. "Yes," he replied; "good fellow as ever was when the drink is out of him, but he's too easy. I found him in Plymouth in a bad way, and as I hadn't the money for a cab, I carried him wrapped in my oil-skin. When I got to Stonehouse Hill I met the police, and they stopped me: 'What was I carrying, was it Government stores?' I put him up against the wall, and I said, 'Why do you stop me? I ain't drunk and disorderly.' 'No,' they replied, 'but we must look into your bundle, and know where you're going.' 'Well,' I said, 'if you must know, it's my shipmate, Jem ——, if you call that Government stores; he's not disorderly either, and I'm carrying him to Miss Weston;

she'll take care of him.' The police let me pass, and here I am at last."

I could not help thinking what an act of practical Christianity that was on the part of that man, and only hoped that in our way we should live up to it. I do not think that any one can come up to bluejackets for self-sacrificing acts of kindness on behalf of shipmates or friends.

CHAPTER IX

TO WALES AND THE MOUNTAINS

We worked hard early and late during 1876, but, alas! found that our friends were right, and that the small low rooms in which we had ensconced ourselves, looking into a courtyard, were too insanitary for us. Miss Wintz, as I have said, broke down, and the doctor pronounced it "blood poisoning," looked contemptuously at our rooms, and said "that good people did foolish things; the sooner we got out of them the better," and recommended mountain air to both of us. It was a delightful prescription, and much as we liked the work, and determined to stick to it, we turned our backs on the Sailors' Rest, and our faces towards the mountains, like schoolboys let out for a holiday.

I had been in the Snowdon district several times in earlier life, and knew the ropes, so we made straight for Llanberis. As our prescription was to be out all day, we searched for some country lodgings on the flank of Snowdon, much higher up than Llanberis, and found them off the beaten track up the mountain near a waterfall, called Cennant Mawr.

All day long we roamed about the mountain, getting to beautiful spots, where we could look down

on Lake Padarn, and up to the heights above us. Health soon returned under this treatment, and colour into Miss Wintz's cheeks; the weeks sped all too soon. We climbed Snowdon, and spent a night on the summit more than once; generally he was enveloped in cloud and fog, but sometimes we saw wonders through a rift in the clouds.

Our next move was up the pass of Llanberis, to Pen-y-gwyrd Hotel, where, with Snowdon on the right, Moel Siabod in front, and the Glydrs behind, we were in grand mountain scenery. The Vale of Beddgelert branched away just outside the hotel, with Nant Gwynant and its lovely lakes. The hotel was full of gentlemen climbing the mountains and fishing, and very pleasant company they were, and we ate porridge and Welsh mutton all the time we were there, and never got tired of it.

Our holiday nearly over, we went for a few days to Bettws-y-Coed, a perfect fairyland after the high mountains, with the lovely Swallow Falls, and then we made our way south, back to work again, full of health, and glad to be amongst the warships, the boys in blue, and the wear and tear of the Sailors' Rest. I was then able to make an arrangement whereby I secured some rooms in a house on Roborough Down, so that we could both of us get on with our work, and yet take copious draughts of moorland air.

About this date a remarkable convention was held at Brighton, and the teaching turned on what was then called "The Higher Christian Life." It had been preceded by a former convention at Oxford, and great attention was concentrated upon it, with much adverse criticism. Very much interested in

such a subject, we went to Brighton and attended the meetings held in the Pavilion ; we found that the teaching was not new, but old. A series of Bible-readings, given by Mrs. Pearsall Smith, on the wanderings of the Israelites and their entrance into the Promised Land, were a very great help to us, and we learned that Christ came to be an indwelling Saviour, and that union with Himself is rest, peace, and all that is needed for a successful and happy Christian life ; this has been our continual experience, and we came back to our work feeling far richer than before.

It was cheering to hear of good accomplished, and as I look over past years I could give hundreds of instances of men whose lives were quite changed by coming to the Sailors' Rest. One day, visiting the naval prisoners at Bodmin Gaol, a man said to me, "You don't know the good that your cabins at the Sailors' Rest do us chaps ; if I'd only gone on sleeping there I should never have been in quod.

"I never came to any meetings, and I only saw you once, as you passed through the coffee-bar, but when I took a cabin I broke off with the low public-house where I used to sleep, and as long as I stayed there I kept straight ; but I met some old pals and they persuaded me first to a drop of drink and then to come back to my old diggings, and I broke my leave, and Bodmin is the end of it." So I have gone on increasing cabins, and am increasing them still.

Among the little adjuncts to homeliness I counted a parrot and a big retriever dog. The parrot used to call out as the men came in, "Walk in, Jack ; glad to see you ; have a cup of coffee?" and a good

many other lively and pleasant sayings ; but, alas ! he died of kindness, as the men would give him ham, salt beef, and sausages. The last words he said to me as he lay in my arms were, "Please kiss poor Polly," and he died. The men actually shed tears when they found that their old friend was no more. I have him stuffed to this day. And then Hector the retriever was a grand dog ; he used to stand on the doorstep looking out for the *Cambridge* men as they landed at four o'clock, wagging his tail, and putting his paws on their shoulders. He was a splendid swimmer, and would jump off the bridge into Stonehouse Creek, to the admiration of passers-by.

One naughty thing he did, although the men greatly rejoiced in it, and I fear encouraged him. He would swim off to the *Cambridge*, right across the harbour, for the sole purpose of fighting the Commander's dog. Many a fight I believe they had on the quiet among the men ; one day it occurred on the upper deck.

"What's all that disturbance ?" said the Captain. "Please sir, it's Miss Weston's dog ; he's swum all the way from Devonport to fight the Commander's dog." In the interests of fair play the Captain allowed the battle to be fought out. Hector used to act as our bodyguard when we drove out to Roborough Down after dark in our little pony-trap ; but, alas, he also succumbed, as did poor Polly, to the kindness of the men, who used to buy any quantity of jam-tarts, and shoot them down his throat as he performed his begging tricks. With the exception of my little Dartmoor pony, Bob, he was the last pet that I indulged in.

Although I have been spinning my yarn principally

over the year 1876, still 1875 is linked to it, and before I pass on to fresh scenes I must not forget to chronicle an interesting episode at Portsmouth. Admiral Sir Leopold M'Clintock was Admiral-Superintendent at Portsmouth Dockyard. His was a striking career indeed. He was a naval officer of the highest type, and, best of all, a sincere Christian. His fame as an Arctic navigator is well known. In the steam-yacht *Fox* he was the discoverer of the fate of the gallant Franklin and his ship's company. He spent some of the best years of his life in grappling with the icy darkness of the Arctic regions, and returned crowned with honours.

In 1875 I was working in Portsmouth, in the dockyard and on board the ships, and then and there commenced a friendship with Admiral Sir Leopold and Lady M'Clintock that has been life-long. Such kind interest was taken in my work that a drawing-room meeting was convened by Lady M'Clintock at the Admiral-Superintendent's house in the dockyard, at which I was able to give an account of what had been done, and of what we hoped to do in the future, in connection with the Sailors' Rest at Devonport.

But a new interest was coming on, and that was no less than a Government Arctic expedition under Captain Sir George Nares. To Admiral M'Clintock the charge of selecting the ships, fitting them up, and sending the expedition off, was entrusted. The ships selected were the *Alert*, a seventeen-gun sloop, and for the second the Admiral bought a whaler, which, as regarded build, steam-power, and size, was admirably adapted for the work; she was named

the *Discovery*. During part of 1874 they were being fitted up, and on May 20, 1875, the expedition sailed. The men were selected with great care as suitable in every way, and when all were told off, and the expedition nearly ready to sail, I had a farewell tea-party for them, organised by Mr. G. D. Dowkontt. Many of my old friends were going, and who was certain to come back?

Several of the men were total abstainers, notably a very fine fellow, a petty officer named Adam Ayles. He stuck bravely to his promise all through the time. He said that he had promised his mother never to touch strong drink, and he "war'nt going to break his promise to her for all the snow and ice in the Arctic regions." It was notable that he enjoyed better health than any of the ship's company. On the terrible sledging expeditions, where men stricken with scurvy had to be dragged on the sledges, Ayles was always to the fore, and so by his help the pledge-book and cards of the Royal Naval Temperance Society went farther north than any had gone before or since.

I gave each man a little Testament, which fitted nicely into the pocket of his duffle coat. As the men were speaking one after another one of them said, "What about our *Monthly Letters*, our *Blue Backs?* we shall want them more than ever up in the Arctic." It was a posing question, and I asked, "Could any one suggest some plan, as certainly no mails could reach them in Smith's Sound, locked up in snow and ice."

Bluejackets always find a way out of a difficulty. One of them was up in a twinkling, and he said

to me, "I know what you can do; we may be away three years, perhaps not, but best to be on the safe side. If you will write thirty-six letters right ahead, one for every month, and have them put up in two boxes, one for the *Alert* and one for the *Discovery*, I'll take charge of the box for the *Alert*, and there'll soon be a volunteer for the *Discovery*, and we'll serve them out the first of every month, and it'll be almost as good as if they came straight from you."

This suggestion was carried unanimously, and I set to work to get them ready, and before the expedition sailed they were alongside the ships, in company with pianos, plum-puddings, and countless things which had to be left behind. However, Sir Leopold said that "Whatever was left behind, the *Blue Backs* were to go," and the Admiral's word was law.

Years afterwards I was on board H.M.S. *Duke of Wellington*, then the flagship at Portsmouth, when a seaman asked me if I remembered sending the *Blue Backs* to the *Alert* and *Discovery*. "I was on board the *Discovery*," he said, "and how we used to look forward to your letters during the long dark winter, and I am so glad to tell you that through them I learned to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, and I've had sunshine in my heart ever since."

While I was busy at Portsmouth Miss Wintz was not only looking after Devonport, but she was travelling about the country to organise meetings that I could take. Young and delicate-looking, she had the pluck of the bravest man in the service. She opened the way for me in London, Manchester,

Liverpool, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and half the towns in the British Isles, and those that know the work of organisation will probably realise something of what she went through; arriving at these large centres without knowing any one, finding out the leaders in philanthropic and Christian work, calling upon them, interesting them, and finally securing drawing-room meetings or halls, and preparing all for me. By her help I have held meetings through the length and breadth of the land from those early days until the present date, and the interest and enthusiasm evoked has often amazed me, and the kindness that I have received is not to be told.

I am afraid that my memory as to exact dates is not quite as good as it ought to be, but it was in the late seventies or early eighties that I paid a visit to H.M.S. *Britannia* at Dartmouth. Captain, afterwards Admiral, Fairfax was the Captain of the ship, and the two young sons of the then Prince of Wales, our present King, Prince Edward and Prince George, were cadets on board, under the care of the Rev. W. Dalton, their tutor, now Canon of Windsor.

I remember so well being introduced to them, and how bright and sunny they were; they showed me their neat little cabins and their study, and also the family portraits that were all round their rooms. It was a drizzly sou'-westerly day, but they had to go out into the Channel in the brig for drill with the other cadets. Somewhat later they came round to Devonport and went over the Sailors' Rest, were much amused with the parrot, with his "Walk in, Jack, and have a cup of coffee," and, acting on his

advice, they indulged in coffee and plum-duff, and when some years later I was at Cambridge, Prince Edward, then a student at Trinity College, sent for me to his rooms, to inquire about my work, and laughingly asked, "Whether the plum-duff was as good now as when he was a cadet on board the *Britannia?*"

One of the efforts to further spiritual life in the navy was started about this time; I am alluding to the *Royal Naval Christian Union.* An officer serving on board H.M.S. *Royal Adelaide*, then the flagship at Devonport, used to come up to see me very frequently, and he also gave kind help in taking the men's Bible-classes. He was anxious to start a Union of Christians of all denominations, the bond being that they should trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, and should promise to serve Him; and that the Union should combine officers and men. Lieutenant Charles Prater little thought that such a tree would grow from so small a seed, but the R.N.C.U. now numbers over two thousand members, including the wives, and has members or branches on board most of the ships in the service. The "*One Bell*" meeting for prayer, held daily on board a large number of our ships, is an outcome of the work of the Union.

The headquarters are at the Royal Sailors' Rests, Portsmouth and Devonport, with a good division at Chatham. The organ of the Union is the *R.N.C.U. Gazette*, published monthly, and corresponding secretaries are scattered all over the world. The President is Admiral R. S. Lowry.

Lieutenant Prater lived to see the work firmly

established, and then he passed away, but he will never be forgotten. The R.N.T.S. and the R.N.C.U. are two great societies, doing yeoman work in the service. I could tell story upon story of men, who, through the influence of both these societiés, started on new and better lives.

The Mission Band, R.N.C.U., was holding a simple service in the open air, on Portsdown Hill, on a Whit Monday; thousands were there, and, attracted by bluejackets in uniform, they gathered round and listened intently. Some months afterwards I received a letter from Gibraltar, from a soldier stationed on the Rock. He said, "Could you tell the fine fellows forming the Mission Band of your R.N.C.U. that I can never forget their words in the open air on Whit Monday; their bright faces and manly Christianity made me think, and led me to my Bible. I am now as happy as they are, and I am serving the same Saviour."

Sometimes they are able to hire a hall in some foreign port, and to invite English-speaking people, especially sailors and soldiers, to come, and who can estimate the good that the men of the R.N.C.U. have done at home and abroad?

CHAPTER X

OUR PORTSMOUTH MUSIC-HALL

EVENTS crowd rather thick and fast during the years 1878 and 1879. I have headed this chapter "Our Portsmouth Music-Hall," and, strange as it may seem, a music-hall was my first possession in this great seaport town.

I had been backwards and forwards to Portsmouth many times for work among the men on board ship and ashore, and as I came and went I could not but notice a densely thronged thoroughfare called Commercial Road. When the men left their ships they all made for it. Most of the theatres and music-halls frequented by them were in this direction; and outfitters' and drapers' shops succeeded each other in bewildering confusion.

It is still called "the most crowded thoroughfare in the south of England," and it was and is a very Regent Street for the naval world. Still, I never thought for a moment of starting a Sailors' Rest there; Devonport seemed quite enough.

I was travelling about, speaking in town after town, telling all the good that I could think of the British bluejacket and his belongings, and also of the great needs of our second great naval centre, Devonport. On this occasion I had been staying at

Bradford, Yorkshire, with a very kind friend. I had a good meeting there, and was due at York on Monday, April 14, for a meeting, I think, at the Deanery.

I can remember that Sunday now; it was like a March day, and in the afternoon violent squalls of wind, accompanied by sleet, swept over the Yorkshire hills. I little thought that one of these squalls burst upon H.M.S. *Eurydice* as she was rounding the Isle of Wight under sail, making for Spithead. She was a training ship for young ordinary seamen, and was commanded by one of the most gallant officers in the navy, and withal a true and earnest Christian. I had been on board the *Eurydice* at Portsmouth, and had spoken to the ship's company; I can almost see those hundreds of bright, young faces now.

I had started a branch of the *Royal Naval Temperance Society* among them, and the pledge-book and cards were on board, the former bearing a roll of names. Captain Marcus Hare, R.N., was most anxious about the spiritual welfare of the hundreds of young fellows under his command, and we parted for the winter cruise, looking forward to meeting again in the spring. But it was not to be. That gallant ship, caught in a moment in the squall, went over before the sails could be furled, and only two men escaped to tell the tale.

One of them told me that the Captain was on the bridge, and after giving the order to every man to save himself, he clasped his hands in prayer and went down with the ship. "I don't profess to be a Christian man," said he, "but if there ever was one, it was our Captain."

When I arrived at York on the Monday, I found

deep sorrow. Mrs. Marcus Hare had been staying there and arranging the meeting, when she had unexpectedly received a telegram that the *Eurydice* had arrived, and she hastened off to meet her husband. On the journey between York and London the awful news of the loss of the ship and all hands was sprung upon her.

Many weary weeks passed before the ship was raised. She was towed into Portsmouth harbour on September 5, five months later.

Some weeks afterwards I received the ship's pledge-book and cards from the Admiralty ; there were the young fellows' names. The books and cards crumbled to dust after a little exposure to the air, but I was able once more to read the names of my brave and true friends, whom I should see no more until the sea gave up her dead. Possibly this accident may have made me think more as to the building of a Sailors' Rest at Portsmouth, but whether that be so or not, I know whose Power guided me and opened the way.

I cannot forget the kindness of Miss Robinson at this time ; she welcomed me to the Soldiers' Institute, and encouraged me in my wish to start a Sailors' Rest.

Looking about in the neighbourhood of this busy Commercial Road for a house to rent, and so to try the experiment, I lighted upon this Music-Hall, to which was attached two small houses and a tiny shop on the main street. This place looked as if it would do very well for a trial trip, and I took it for a short time, and set to work putting up a bright little coffee-bar and reading-room. I could not accomplish beds; there was only just room for the manager and his wife and ourselves.

That Music-Hall! it was a strange old place, with a flaunting stage and proscenium, plenty of seats, broken floor, and none too sanitary, judging by the whiffs of sewer-gas that came up. Moreover, it was a rendezvous of rats, who, emerging no doubt from the sewers, played high games round the deserted place, occasionally making excursions to other parts of the building, as, for instance, when I came down one morning to my sitting-room there was a grey-whiskered rat sitting in my easy-chair, and devouring our tinned salmon. I wished for my old bull-terrier Crib, but the rat escaped to pay us visits later with other friends.

We had good work in that Music-Hall; the men gathered around us, and were determined to help; the little coffee-bar was packed to suffocation, and so was the reading-room upstairs. Our own sitting-room was used for all sorts of purposes—for Bible-classes, meetings for prayer and singing, a quiet corner for conversation and letter-writing; our only quiet corner in those days was our bedroom.

I had Saturday night entertainments in the Music-Hall, to which any one was welcome—plenty of music from the band and piano, songs by the men and musical friends, recitations, feats of agility and strength; it was, and is, very important to provide bright, clean entertainments for the people. Good folks criticised, and said "that it was wrong," and I went through a good deal of fire, but the more I thought about it, and prayed about it, the clearer it seemed to me that I was doing God's work in this very thing. So I plucked up courage and went forward, presiding at all the entertainments my-

self, and rigidly excluding anything of a doubtful character.

Sometimes I must confess that the bluejackets gave me away, I am sure unintentionally, by singing some song which I had passed on the programme on account of its innocent title, but which was rather doubtful. I used to stop these songs, sorry as I was to offend the singer.

One bluejacket, a wild young fellow, was to sing, and although he knew that character songs were excluded, he scandalised us by jumping out on the stage in Mary the housemaid's print dress, apron, and cap: that very man became afterwards a temperance man, and one of my best helpers in the service.

Spite of all these little difficulties I worked my way on; the Saturday night entertainments, at first well abused by everybody, were copied all over the town, and our large hall at the present Sailors' Rest is still crowded every Saturday night, and, best of all, this entertainment recruits for our Sunday meetings, many men saying that they enjoyed themselves so much on the Saturday nights, that they were sure that they would like it on Sundays. The Music-Hall was a grand success as far as work went; there was only one fault, it was crowded out.

What was to be done under these circumstances? To buy in Commercial Road was very expensive, and in the busy part of it houses were never in the market; they passed from hand to hand. Quietly and earnestly we prayed about it. Some people do not believe in answered prayer; my work has been continuous evidence of it for over thirty years, and

will be so to the end. Devonport, of course, was swallowing up all the money that I could get for it, and at Portsmouth no house was available, and I had not got the money, but perseveringly I prayed.

One day the carpenter who was doing some work on our premises, told Miss Wintz of a good site in a splendid position ; he said that he had heard that the owner, a business man, would be glad to sell privately if he had an offer. I saw him and explained our plans, which interested him greatly, and we agreed upon a price.

I then received by post a cordial invitation from one who has ever been a kind friend to this work, Anthony Denny, Esq., to hold a drawing-room meeting at his house ; the meeting was convened, and the great drawing-room in Connaught Place was crowded. Mr. Denny presided himself, and he asked me before the meeting commenced what I wanted ? I told him £1000. "Very good," he said, "you'll get it in time." I went on speaking, and people seemed much interested ; and I saw my host, paper in hand, stepping about among his guests.

When I ceased he said, "Miss Weston told me before she commenced that she wanted £1000 for Portsmouth. I am very glad to tell her that those present who have listened to her have subscribed ONE THOUSAND GUINEAS, and in their name, and my own, I hand her a cheque for £1050."

My heart almost stopped beating, and only when I looked at the cheque could I believe it. Yes, our loving Father had given this money as a foundation-stone for Portsmouth, and had shown me clearly that I was doing His will in this work.

Up to the present date I have received from all sources nearly ONE MILLION sterling, and I have looked upon every penny as from God, and so I began to buy and presently to build at Portsmouth.

It was good to see the building rise; but at first I had no hall, and used a long narrow room for that purpose, but behind the building was a large court-yard. As time went on a great tent was put up, and we had our tent services, and at last the tent was struck, and we took possession of our large hall, which we occupy now.

But I must not run on so fast. The Portsmouth Sailors' Rest was opened on the 13th June 1881. It was not easy to get all the money needed, and as I have always avoided debt, I could not push on too quickly, and meantime the Devonport work was growing enormously. I had opened a branch house opposite the gates of the great steam-yard at Keyham, then a suburb of Devonport; the two houses stood, one outside the main gates in Fore Street, the other outside the gates of the steam-yard, as it was then called.

I must not either forget to tell some of the difficulties that I encountered in Fore Street from our neighbours, the publicans. They were furious at the advent of a coffee-house, and still more when two ladies arrived to take up their residence there. They said "that it was a disgraceful innovation, and ought to be crushed by all right-thinking men. As to ladies coming to live in such a place, and to look after sailors, well, they could be no ladies, that was very certain." "If there is any one on earth I hate, it's that Miss Weston of yours," said one of

these worthy Bonifaces to my manager. "She brings a blight upon all honest trade."

This was sad, but at the same time very encouraging. Men were promised free drinks, and one of the publicans went so far as to draw several pints of beer, place them on a shelf, and place half-a-crown at the bottom of one pint pot. The frequenters of the Sailors' Rest were invited each to take a pot, as a free drink, and the lucky man, of course, got the half-crown as well as the beer.

I also knew of cases when men had been drugged and robbed, and disappeared for a few days in these places, and I could tell of worse things still. However, the men crowded to the Sailors' Rest; it was "coffee pot" *v.* "beer jug," and the coffee pot came off the victor. The publicans then threatened to break the plate-glass windows, but remembering that it takes two to make a quarrel, I advised them to change their trade for a better one, and insured the windows.

As time went on, a pretty constant changing of landlords took place in the public-houses opposite. To the best of my remembrance there were three and a pawn-shop, and the rumour spread that the three public-houses were to be pulled down, and a large gin palace was to be built on their site by a syndicate, which would soon finish the Sailors' Rest; and then came another report that the lord of the manor, then Sir John St. Aubyn, afterwards Lord St. Levan, refused to lease the land for that purpose.

Anyhow, to my great delight, the public-houses came down, dragging the pawn-shop after them, and two large places of business—an ironmonger and an

outfitter—were built on their site as an answer to the accusation of the publican "that Miss Weston blighted all honest trade." When, a year or two later, I had succeeded in capturing and buying out the public-houses on our side of the street, and the foundation-stone for the new building was being laid, the outfitter came over to lay a five-pound note on the stone, as a small return for the increased trade brought to him by the men frequenting the Sailors' Rest.

Months rolled by, and we still held our own, and enlarged the Sailors' Rest by building more dormitories, then a hall on a larger scale ; then an additional cottage in Dockwall Street was acquired, and still the popularity of the place grew so much, that a late Junior Civil Lord of the Admiralty, W. S. Caine, M.P., calculated that the Sailors' Rests saved the country one million sterling a year.

The sailor boys still crowded us out whenever they came ashore, bright and cheery as ever. The attendance at the Bible-classes was quite voluntary, but they were always crowded on Sundays and Thursdays.

One of our boys went to H.M.S. *Alexandra*. He fell from aloft, striking his head against an iron ring in the deck. The doctor pronounced it at once to be a bad case of concussion of the brain, and feared the worst. He was unconscious for days, but just before he died a lucid interval came, and he said to the sick-berth steward, "Give my love to Miss Weston, and to all the ladies at the Sailors' Rest, and say I've gone on ahead to Jesus. I gave my heart to Him at the Sunday Bible-class, and He's with me now."

One Sunday afternoon a seaman came into the hall when I was presiding over a meeting of boys; he listened to the singing, and the tears ran down his cheeks. He told me that a few weeks before he had got very drunk, and was in a fight in Fore Street; he was a herculean man, and it had taken four policemen to carry him into the dockyard; he was punished by stoppage of leave, and this was the first Sunday that he had been out.

He said, "As I came out of the gates I was heading for the '*Lord Nelson*' when I heard the boys singing; it reminded me of my mother, and of the old Sunday-school, and I came in; the sight of them and the words that they sung have capsized me." He was induced to sign the temperance pledge, and afterwards became an out and out Christian man.

In those old days the paying-off of ships was terrible, although not as bad as some years before, when men put bank-notes between pieces of bread and butter and ate them.

I remember an incident that occurred about the time of which I am writing. A number of men paid off from H.M.S. ——, with plenty of money, determined to have an astonishing lark; they hired all the cabs in the town, to go in procession; they themselves, with a fiddler, and a great jar of rum, got on the roof of the first cab, and off they started, stopping at numberless public-houses for a drink. By the time they got back to their starting-place the money was nearly gone, and the only sober members of the procession were the horses.

But things were improving. One day several young

seamen came to me and said, "We calls you Mother ; will you act a Mother's part, and draw our half-pay, and take care of it while we are away?" Always anxious to help them I said that I would do so, and half-pay papers began to flow in. I had to draw the money from the Government Pay Office monthly and bank it. I soon saw that every care must be taken, so I associated a co-trustee with myself, and all the books—I have them now—were carefully kept in a business-like way.

Whenever they wanted their money, they could get it, and anything that they needed when on foreign service we bought and sent out—concertinas, sewing-machines, bones and Christy-Minstrel rigs-out—everything that can be thought of, probable and improbable.

At last I used to draw something like £1600 from the dockyard monthly, and about £84,000 of the men's money passed through my hands. I often went to the Admiralty to ask that Savings Banks at the dockyards might be started, so that I might be able to transfer this big responsibility to Government security, and at last this was done, and was crowned with eminent success.

I was over £100 on the wrong side of the ledgers when the books were finally audited, but it was well worth all the trouble and loss, as it led to a great departure in the Savings Bank system by the Admiralty, which has enabled men not only to save money on board ship in the Ship's Savings Bank, but to transfer it to the Dockyard Bank on the ship paying off ; and so the links are complete.

At the present time it is a pleasure to see the

paying-off of a ship. It is generally done early in the day, and frequently the trains are backed into the dockyard alongside ; in other cases railway tickets are bought on board, and the men come in crowds into the Sailors' Rest for a wash and a brush up, a cup of coffee and a sandwich, before starting.

In speaking of the bluejackets and marines with whom I have been associated so long, there is one noble trait that runs through all my reminiscences from first to last, and it is this, Jack never considers anything impossible ; it was proved at Ladysmith when the guns of the *Powerful* were brought up and placed in position, and it is being proved every day.

An old Captain whom I knew well was discussing an evolution with his First Lieutenant. "It's impossible, sir," said the junior officer. "Impossible," cried the Captain, somewhat choleric ; "reach down my dictionary, sir, and turn to the word 'impossible.'" He looked, and then said, "It isn't in your dictionary ; it's ruled out with red ink." "No, sir," said the Captain, "it's not in my dictionary, or in the dictionary of any naval officer ; such a word is not used in the navy ; carry out my instructions." The instructions were carried out, and the evolution was successfully performed.

There is another trait which is called "doing a growl," and in some naval establishments a book is kept, in which to record these complaints, called a "Growl Book." As untoward incidents must happen in every large institution, I manage in this way : any and every man has free access to myself, and all complaints are carefully gone into and, if, possible, remedied. Added to this, we have "General Purposes

Meetings," at frequent intervals, which are open to all men, and where complaints can be made, and also suggestions as to improvement; steam is blown off, and perhaps an explosion averted.

I was lunching once with an Admiral, when the conversation turned on this naval trait. "Does the Admiral ever grumble?" I asked the lady at the head of the table. "I should think so," she said laughingly. "If he did not, I should think he was going to die!"

CHAPTER XI

THE CAPTURE OF THE PUBLIC-HOUSES

THIS event was a great one, and looms largely in my life's story, although many years have passed since that day of victory. I have said that we were surrounded by public-houses at Devonport; those opposite had been pulled down, but there were three between ourselves and the dockyard gates—the "*Napier Inn*," the "*Royal Naval Rendezvous*," and the "*Dock Gates' Inn*." It is difficult to get hold of one public-house; three seemed like an impossibility, but that word has always been ruled out of our dictionaries.

I wanted to enlarge the Sailors' Rest, and the way of the public-houses seemed the best. "Can't you shake out a reef or two," many said, "and get hold of those grog-shops?" It would be a grand move, and a lessening of temptation to the men, and I began negotiations for the "*Napier*" and the "*Royal Naval Rendezvous*." There seemed a chance of my being able to buy them up, licences and all, if I had the money.

The post one morning brought me a foreign letter with the post-mark "Fiume" upon it. I opened it, and out dropped a cheque for a thousand pounds, sent by Robert Whitehead, Esq., inventor of the

Whitehead torpedoes. He said that he had heard I wanted to buy and pull down two public-houses, and he hoped that his enclosure would knock a hole in one of them.

He was followed by a kind benefactress, Mrs. Langworthy of Manchester, who also enclosed a cheque for a thousand pounds. What with Mr. Whitehead's torpedo, and Mrs. Langworthy's thousand-pounder, a big breach was blown metaphorically in the walls of the public-houses. These heavy missiles were followed by one-hundred-pounders, fifty-pounders, ten-pounders, five-pounders, and one-pounders, and capitulation seemed imminent.

Very much encouraged, I turned longing eyes on the "*Dock Gates' Inn*," with its dancing saloon behind, and an active treaty was in progress with the owners of this corner public-house to sell, that the whole block might be carried by storm.

About this time I happened to be visiting the Royal Naval Hospital, Plymouth; a seaman was lying on his bed in the last stage of consumption. He had served on board one of the turret-ships, and had been a picture of health and strength.

With his skeleton finger he beckoned me to his bedside, and, between his gasps, he whispered in my ear, "Have you got the '*Dock Gates' Inn?*'" "Not yet," I replied, "but I believe we shall. We are asking God to give it to us." "And so am I," he said earnestly, laying his bony hand on my arm. "I am praying to God night and day on my bed to give you that place; there I learned to drink, and the drink has brought me here."

Poor fellow! he was going down like a sinking

boat, but his one desire was that the public-house that had worked his ruin might be done away with. His prayer was answered: the large sum of money needed for the purchase of these public-houses and their licences was obtained, and when the last barrel of beer was rolled out, and they were closed, and the keys were laid upon my table, we were all thankful that every public-house between ourselves and the Royal Dockyard had been demolished, and that we should be the first to greet the sailor as he stepped out of the yard into the town. When the time came to pay the money it was ready, and, in conjunction with my trustees, I became the proud owner of three of the worst public-houses in Devonport.

Some may ask how I can account for this? I cannot account in any way, except in one way, that there is a loving Father always ready to listen to His children, and to give them every good thing.

I am often asked how I can bear the strain of such an enormous work, which increases every year? I can tell the secret. Many Christian people know it, and others do not; it is wrapped up in a "*life of faith on the Son of God.*" There is no worry or anxiety in this life, because all burdens are borne by the great Burden-Bearer when once the will is surrendered to Christ, and the life of union has begun. It is "*Not I but Christ.*" I could not have done even the smallest part of this work if God had not shown me this truth, and made it a living reality to me.

Amidst dust and rubbish the old houses came down and were carted away, and the foundations were laid of a fine pile of buildings that stand there

to this day. Some touching incidents occurred in connection with the money raised. "I'd like, if you please, to have a shilling shot at these grog-shops," said a stalwart bluejacket on board one of Her Majesty's ships. "I only wish I could do more; many a 'wet' I've had there, but when you've pulled it down and built up the teetotal block, I'll call for half-a-pint of coffee."

Another young seaman brought a sovereign, carefully wrapped up in silver paper, and after some circumlocution said, "It was from his young lady who was in service." Asking him the reason of her great interest in the work, he coloured up, and bashfully said, "It's because of the change she sees in me."

The new pile of buildings adjoining the original building rose steadily, and in 1888 the corner-stone was laid by Admiral H. D. Grant, C.B., and before long the top-stone was fixed. The restaurant is a splendid room with every convenience, and bright with mirrors, gilding, and colour. The boys' room is equally fine, and is built on the site of the old dancing saloon of the "*Dock Gates' Inn.*" The cabins tower tier after tier down the street and round the corner.

But I did not stop here; after a while the original Sailors' Rest began to show signs of collapsing; floors assumed strange angles, doors and windows would not shut; so I pulled it down and built on its site, and that of another house above it, the "Queen Victoria Memorial Hall" and cabins. All in its time, I must not forestall too much; but as I write the picture unrolls itself before me.

ROYAL SAILORS' REST, DEVONPORT.

For some years I had Sailors' Rests also at Portland and Sheerness, but the leases of these places ran out, and I did not renew. We had two, but we could not supervise four places properly; two were as many as we could manage, and we decided that "what was worth doing was worth doing well," and so we stood by the premier ports of Portsmouth and Devonport.

While I was planning and working for the men at home I did not forget those abroad. My correspondence was very large, and it is now larger still; every month *Ashore and Afloat* and my *Monthly Letter* went hand in hand in their long journeyings to ships and sailors all over the world. It was marvellous to note the effect that they seemed to have on the seafaring community everywhere.

The British and American ships lay side by side at Yokohama, *Ashore and Afloat* and a *Blue Back* got on board, and they were read and passed from hand to hand. The American sailors were most anxious to have them, and consequently I wrote to the Secretary of the Navy Board at Washington, enclosed him copies, and said that if in his opinion they were likely to do good in their service, I would send them with pleasure. I received a letter from him saying that he had read them, and was confident that they would do a great deal of good, and if I would address them and send them to their receiving office in London, that they would gladly forward them to their ships all over the world free of charge.

I have been in close touch with the American navy since that day. I have visited many warships, and have spoken to the men and boys, and have always

been so kindly received that I have felt quite at home under the "Stars and Stripes," and received not long ago a very nice letter from the chaplain of one of the United States training ships. He says, "Our boys wish you to accept the little gift accompanying this letter as a token of appreciation of your many offices of goodwill towards them and your interest in their welfare. The boys read *Ashore and Afloat* and your *Monthly Letters* with great delight and interest, and will continue to do so as long as you send them. All the boys on our training ship are well acquainted with you through your letters, and should you meet any of them, they will be so glad to know you personally. Wishing you God speed in the work, I remain yours truly, —— Chaplain."

The token that the chaplain speaks of was a beautifully bound volume of Longfellow's Poems, and a message written in it to the effect that "it came with the grateful thanks of the American sailor boys."

We also send large quantities of the *Ashore and Afloat* and *Monthly Letters* to the mercantile service, deep-sea fishermen, coastguardsmen, and lighthouse keepers. The output at the present time is: *Ashore and Afloat*, 750,100 copies; and *Monthly Letters*, 770,680 copies a year.

The coastguard service is being gradually abolished. I for one am sorry; the coastguards are so interwoven with my past life. Only men of good character could get in, and it was a comfortable little billet with its bit of kitchen-garden and whitewashed cottage for Jack ashore. The coastguard pacing up and down

under the white ensign, with his telescope under his arm, ready to do or to dare anything to save life in stormy weather, is known to many of us. We are sorry that these living pictures ashore of the navy afloat should pass away. I have been to many of these stations, and always visit them regularly by means of my monthly packets. Many of the men are total abstainers and belong to the *Royal Naval Temperance Society*, and others are very earnest Christian men.

Some have been turned to God in ways that we should call strange, but I think that one of the most beautiful stories from real life that was ever told me was what we might call "*Under the White Ensign.*"

I remember that glorious summer afternoon; the Solent looked so blue, and the golden haze seemed to shimmer over our great iron ships, destroyers, and torpedo-boats—pictures of intellectual strength, swiftness, and power—and the white ensign, our grand naval flag, floating lazily at the stern of the battleships, carried one's thoughts back to the time when Nelson, Collingwood, and a host of brave men maintained old England's supremacy as mistress of the seas.

My meditations were brought to an abrupt pause by a cheerful hail from a sunburnt bluejacket as he paced up and down under the white ensign that marked out the coastguard station. He was an old friend, and had served on board the *Temeraire* and many another of Her Majesty's ships.

"Beg your pardon," he said, "but I couldn't let you pass. Fine day, isn't it? The sight of that fleet warms me up, and makes me feel that but for the

wife and children I should like to do a bit more sea time. They do look grand ; and is it true, as I've heard, that every ship gets her *Blue Backs* and *Ashore and Afloats?* Well, times have changed since I was a youngster."

"Yes," I replied, as we walked up and down, "we have circulated a large number of *Blue Backs* and *Ashore and Afloat* this year."

"Bless me," he cried, "every ship in the navy has her parcel, and a fellow from the *Orlando* told me that the men came round like bees when the parcel was opened, and they wanted a hundred more every month. And then you send them to the American navy and the merchant sailors no end. I'm glad that Johnnie gets them as well as Jack and Joe and Uncle Sam.

"Do you know," he continued, "it's a sight of good them papers do. Wherever they go men will always read them, if they read nothing else, because they come from Mother Weston. You must want plenty of shiners to do that. I'll give half-a-crown. I know the good that they do at our coastguard station. I wish I could give more. I owe all my happiness to a *Blue Back*."

He suddenly stopped and seized the halyards. The sun was just dropping in the west like a ball of fire ; a puff of smoke, a report, and down fluttered the white ensign. "If you can wait a minute," said my bluejacket friend, "I will tell you about the *Blue Back* and this here old flag."

I willingly waited while he made all taut and trim, and then, his watch being over, he told me his story.

"Do you remember writing a *Blue Back* called

'*The White Ensign*'? It was all about this flag of ours, and the lessons it taught, and how we carried the cross all over the world? The Union Jack in the corner, you said, taught Christian love; the white ground was Christian holiness, and the red cross was the Cross of Christ.

"I was on the coastguard then, near Hastings, and as I read that *Blue Back* in the watch-room, the words they just seemed to sink into my heart, for no one knew better than I did myself what a sinner I was: I kneeled down and prayed when I had read that *Blue Back*. Next morning I was early astir, for mine was the morning watch—it was as beautiful a summer morning as this is a summer evening—and I was just waiting to hoist the ensign.

"The sun showed out of the sea, and up went the flag; as she fluttered out in the morning breeze over my head there was the red cross on the white ground. I kneeled down on the beach, and I felt there and then that Christ was my Saviour, and His Cross my only hope."

The westerly glow lighted up the rugged face of the bluejacket as he uttered these words; and, grasping my hand, he turned away. From that day to this I have never forgotten this story from real life.

It was very bright and cheery on June 13, 1881, to see the crowds of men who came to help to open the Portsmouth Sailors' Rest. At the present time it is much more than double the size than it was in '81. However, our naval friends were well pleased; they said that we were commissioning the ship, that she was a noble three-decker, and that, once built,

the bluejackets would see that she went on floating. Many good speeches were made that night by bronzed sons of the ocean, and we did not forget to thank God, who had given us the place, and to dedicate it to Him.

The same success continued to attend it as had attended Devonport. We have never found that the exclusion of intoxicants has driven away the men—very much the reverse. Our figures up to the present date show that more naval men have used our Sailors' Rests than can be chronicled at any Home where intoxicating drink is sold; the steady men are glad to get a place free from drink, and the drinking men know that they will be cared for, and, if possible, helped into a better life. The house is open all night, and no man in liquor is turned away.

We often see and hear strange things. "Three sheets in the wind, Mother," a man said as he lurched in. "Sorry you should see me like this, but it's a long lane that has no turning; you'll see me a better boy yet."

Another evening a man ingenuously said, "I'm sorry, Mother; indeed I am, but I've been keeping my birthday, and I've had a tot too much; you'll forgive me, and look it over?" I could forgive him, but it was difficult to look it over, as he had already kept three birthdays in the same way in a fortnight. However, he came to the Sailors' Rest, and I hoped that the influence of the place might yet make a man and a Christian of him.

I began to gather workers round me, who had been in the service themselves, and who understood the difficulties of those that they had to deal with.

They visited them on board their ships, and invited them to the Sailors' Rest ashore, distributing also the *Ashore and Afloat* and *Blue Backs*. Lady-workers also kindly gave me their help; many have come and have gone, some are working abroad, or in other lines of Christian work, some remain with me.

Early in the eighties Miss Brown came to me and devoted herself to the classes, meetings, work among sailors' wives, &c.; she is still after all these years helping me in secretarial and other work, and is one of our trustees. I feel that I owe her a great debt of gratitude, and also to other true and earnest ladies who have been with us, or who are with us now.

Portsmouth and Devonport, although not doing such a large and solidly organised work as they are now, were all alive and humming with men. I read in an old note-book these confidences from the men when I returned after a short absence: "We sat down nearly two hundred to tea, Miss Weston, last Sunday afternoon," said a young seaman; "you should have seen us, we were full from stem to stern. You'll have to set to work again, and get bigger quarters; we said we'd eat you out of house and home, and we're doing it."

Another man says: "Aye, but the crowd at tea was nothing to the crowd at night; we were packed like herrings in a barrel, and numbers had to go away. Why, on this reading-table," tapping it significantly, "six of us slept, and I was one of the six. Bluejackets can sleep anywhere; and as to turning, they never want to turn—till they turn out."

Some one overheard one man say to another: "Mind you come back to sleep here. I shall look

out for you." "But suppose," said his chum, "I get a drop too much, Miss Weston won't have me here." "Yes, she will," was the prompt reply. "I've heard her say a dozen times that we were never to stop away while she had a roof to cover us, even if we were drunk. Look here, you see that red lamp over the sleeping-quarters, you make for that; if you see TWO red lamps, make for it, and even if you see THREE."

Some have blamed me for taking in men the worse for drink, but I have always felt that they needed all our care; they were "somebody's boys." And if we copied the Master, we should not leave the poor fellow on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho (even if it happened to run through Portsmouth or Devonport) who had fallen among thieves, and had lost his reason, and his cash, stripped, wounded, and half dead, and so I encouraged the police and others to bring them in. And sad sights we saw then, and often see now.

I remember on one occasion meeting with an adventure, which showed me that personal influence was not to be despised. I was returning from Plymouth to Devonport in the tram-car, when it stopped to take up a herculean seaman who was several "sheets in the wind." He got in noisily, and dropped into a seat by a market woman, on whose shoulder he laid his head, and fell fast asleep. The tram conductor came round for the fares, and looked dubiously at the man, and concluded to pass him by.

When he came to me I said, "I am sure that man will pay." "I daresay he will," he replied, "but I

don't like to stir him up ; he'd be one too much for me, he's Fighting Charlie." I had not numbered Fighting Charlie then among my friends, though I was sorry to see a bluejacket in that condition, so I said, "I'll pay for him with pleasure."

On went the car, and as it neared Devonport passengers got out, casting furtive glances at Charlie, who was now lying stretched at full length in the car. In those days the cars went half-way down Fore Street.

"What will you do with him?" I said to the conductor ; "when you get to your journey's end, you'll have to turn him out or carry him back to Plymouth." "Oh, I guess me and the driver will contrive to get him out, and if he's sleepy he'll lie down in the gutter."

As the car proceeded down Fore Street I thought I would try to speak to him, and so perhaps prevent a struggle ; standing over him I said, "Charlie, it's time to turn out, do you hear?" He made no reply, but struck out with his fists. I kept in a safe place and said again, "Come along, Charlie, look alive."

He opened his eyes and looked at me then, and jerked out, "Why, it's my Mother Weston!" "Yes," I replied, "it is your Mother Weston, and very sorry she is to see you like this ; now what are you going to do?" "I'll go with you wherever you take me," he replied. "You will leave the car quietly and you won't fight?" "No," he said, "I'll do whatever you say."

Rather incautiously I said, "Then you had better come with me." He was got out, but his

walking powers were very limited. I took him by the arm, and beckoned to a bluejacket whom I knew to go to the other side, which he did. Poor fellow, he certainly had no control over his legs; they flew into the air or else his feet dragged on the ground, and I feared a catastrophe, which soon came, and in a moment I found myself in the street with Charlie on the top of me, and my sailor friend doing his level best to pull us both up.

After a time we were on our way again, and close to the Sailors' Rest; we managed to negotiate the swing doors, and he was soon on a couch sleeping it off. His horror and consternation the next day, when his mates told him of the episode in Fore Street, cannot be told. He came up to say how sorry he was, what a good father and mother he had, and that he would give up the drink. "As to you," he said, "you've been more than a mother to me; and if I hear any one saying a word against you, if he is as big as a church tower, I'll knock him down."

I have been looking over some entries in my old diaries about this date, and it is curious to read that we were so delighted with what we should call now our small receipts, and our sleepers, when we first opened at Portsmouth. It runs thus: "We are doing well, taking quite £6 a day over our counters, and housing 20, sometimes 30 men, every night." At the present time our receipts are £40, sometimes £60 or £80 a day, and our sleepers 400 and 500 a night, sometimes 1000 when every bed is let, and men are lying on the floor. We are now building 200 more cabins at Portsmouth.

Well do I recollect an incident about this time which was amusing and might have been serious. It was Whit Monday, and a lovely day ; a monster temperance meeting was to be held in Netley Abbey, a most picturesque and romantic spot. The Blue Ribbon movement was at its height, and this was a Blue Ribbon meeting. Mr. William Noble, Archdeacon, then Canon, Wilberforce, and others, including myself, were asked to speak. I went over with Miss Wintz, and we took a gallant band of bluejackets, members of the *Royal Naval Temperance Society*.

The old Abbey looked its best, with its traceried windows, the ivy framing them in, the blue sky above, and carpeted with green grass ; but, best of all, it was crowded with thousands of people. A large platform was erected under the east window, the meeting went on as usual, the speech of the eloquent Canon was of course the centre of the whole. At the close numbers crowded up to sign the temperance pledge, and to put on the bit o' blue.

I was standing at the edge of the platform pinning on the ribbons, the bluejackets with their flag behind me. Suddenly the platform quivered, rolled like a wave of the sea, and went forward. I was flung far out among the audience, Canon Wilberforce was shot on the top of me, ruining his hat, and otherwise bruising himself, others were thrown in various directions, and some were considerably hurt.

The first thing that I remember was scrambling up considerably the worse for wear, to see the Canon allaying the panic, by getting up on a chair and giving out the Doxology, in which we all more

or less joined. The bluejackets had kept their feet, and so had Miss Wintz, and they had gone down with their colours flying, all standing!

As I look through these old diaries I wonder how we got through our work, but we did. Now at Devonport, the next day visiting ships and speaking at Sheerness and Chatham; travelling all night to hold a meeting the next day at Edinburgh; then at Portland, going on board the *Boscawen* and other ships, and back to Devonport.

I see that I mention several meetings in Glasgow. By the kindness of our friends we returned over the border richer by one thousand pounds. Before one of these meetings I was laid up with a bad throat, and was in bed all day, but I got up and went to the meeting, and managed to speak. The collection at that meeting was £150, and so the work went on by leaps and bounds, year by year, as the prophet Nehemiah says, "*By the good hand of our God upon us.*"

CHAPTER XII

THE EGYPTIAN WAR

FROM the time of the Indian Mutiny, when the Naval Brigade, under Captain Peel, R.N., did such good service, to the present day, our seamen and marines, landed, have done splendid work. With all due respect to Tommy Atkins, Jack can put his hand to anything, and in the earlier times the newspaper correspondents used to say that, while the soldiers were waiting sorrowfully for their commissariat, and their cooks, Jack would have made his fire, cooked his soup and bacon, and had even been successful at duff, had eaten the good things, and was dancing to the strains of an old fiddle!

In these modern days arrangements of course are much better, but as Jack adds to his accomplishments of laundry work and needle work that of a cook, he must always be "forrarder" than his brother in arms.

The Egyptian War, including the bombardment of Alexandria, the taking of Tel-el-Kebir, the Gordon Expedition, and the fall of Khartoum, all took place in the eighties, and as the brave fellows in the ships and those landed in the Naval Brigade were our friends, and we were constantly hearing from them, writing to them, and sending them literature and

comforts of every kind, we were deeply interested in all that took place.

Commander Lord Charles Beresford, who so pluckily achieved fame in the *Condor*, was well known to me, for when I first went to Devonport he was Flag-Lieutenant to the late Admiral Sir Harry Keppel, G.C.B. Lord Charles is credited with many wild and plucky adventures; he is brave and chivalrous, and is an embodiment of what the British naval officer should be. His magnetic influence is wonderful; he had only got to hold up his finger, and men in and out of the service would flock around him. "I'd go all over the world with him, if it were not for my two wooden legs," cried an old tar triumphantly.

We hoist the signal, "Well done, *Condor*," once again at the close of his career, and wish him many more years of useful service to the navy, afloat or ashore. Personally he has always been a most kind friend to me, and has helped and advised me in many of my schemes for the good of the men.

The stir and bustle preceding this expedition was great, and I could but encourage the men not to forget their little meetings for prayer and Bible readings when ashore, and to stand by their colours as teetotallers, members of the R.N.T.S.; they promised that they would. Many a letter came from them, written on a drum-head, or a gun, or anything flat; and most interesting those letters were.

"We don't forget the Sailors' Rest at Portsmouth" (or Devonport, as the case may be); "we often think of the meetings. When we bivouac we get a little away after the rifles are piled, and all are

standing easy, and we sing our hymns out of the books that you gave us, and read the Christian Union portion, and talk about better things; and often other men come round and like to sing too, and we give them the *Blue Backs* and *Ashore and Afloat* and they are so pleased to get them, and the soldiers often ask for them."

Another man writes: "I must tell you about our teapot; we call him Mr. Arabi, and when we come home we hope to show him to you. He has been with us all through the expedition, and we call him a lucky teapot, for we teetotallers who stick to him have had no sickness. Many a man who has gone in for his rum and water has been down; they say that if the water is bad the rum takes all the poison out, but we tell them that we don't believe a word of it, for they have been in the hospital tent, but with our Mr. Arabi we haven't been near it."

Scientific teetotalism since those days has proved that Jack's personal conclusions were correct, that no amount of alcohol added to impure water will destroy the germs or bacilli, but that boiled water is immune, and so when I paid a visit to the *Inconstant*, on her return with members of the Naval Brigade, I looked with respect on Mr. Arabi, rather the worse for wear, displayed on a mess table; the men gathered round all eager to tell me what a good friend he had been. He would not have done for afternoon tea in a lady's drawing-room. He was a "three-decker," and would make three brewings of tea at once, but he was awkward, rough, and showed signs of hard usage, but, looking at him from a utilitarian point of view, he was a true temperance

worker, a friend of Jack, and "a man's a man for a' that."

Another incident I remember, that is very characteristic of Jack, occurred at this time. Water, when fresh, was precious, and there was a canal called the "Sweet Water Canal"; fighting was taking place around, and it was a warm corner. Some shells had fallen near, and had destroyed part of the lining wall, so that the water was rapidly oozing into the sand; the loss must be stopped at all risks.

The Engineers were not on the spot to render aid, and the other military men could not wield a trowel, but Jack was sure that he could do it, and if it was a dangerous spot so much the better. Three times the number needed volunteered, and they marched off, carrying such implements as they could improvise; arrived on the spot they set to work, and under the light of a full moon they worked all night.

A stray shell pitched and exploded several times, but without doing any harm, and in the same way a rifle bullet pinged by; when the sun began to show his rim above the desert the work was done and the fresh water saved.

The officer in command was just going to order them to fall in and to march back to the encampment, when "Please, sir, may we stand easy for ten minutes?" saluted his ears. "Certainly," he replied, strolling away. On his return an object greeted his eyes that he had never seen before.

They had spent the time in fixing an upright pole in the sand, and across it they had nailed a board that they had brought with them, which bore this

inscription: "*This is the wall that Jack built.*" And with hearty cheers they formed up, wheeled, and marched back to their tents.

My diary tells me that I went on board the *Ruby* at Chatham. They had been guarding Suez, and seemed to think it rather a dull job, but they said, "Your little *Blue Backs* and your letters used to liven us up." From the *Ruby* I went to the Naval Hospital and saw the sick and wounded from Egypt, talked to them, and tried to cheer them. They chatted away, and told me many an anecdote that I have forgotten now; one was about Lord Charles Beresford, which I have no doubt he would recognise.

Looting of every kind was strictly prohibited, everything was to be honourably paid for. One day Lord Charles met a bluejacket who looked abnormally stout, and had some difficulty in saluting. "What have you got inside your jumper?" he demanded. "Nothing, sir," was the reply. "Stuff," rejoined Lord Charles, "you've been looting; now out with it." There was a convulsive movement under the jumper and a stifled cry.

Seeing that concealment was useless, Jack pulled out Chanticleer. "Please, sir, he was sitting on a fence, and I says to him, 'Now then, you crow for the honour of old England, or it will be the worse for you.' I asked him three times; he wouldn't do it, so, sir, I took him prisoner to do duty at the mess." I believe that Lord Charles kept his weather eye shut and said no more, and Chanticleer promptly found his way into the cooking-pot of the Naval Brigade.

In the year 1885 the Church Congress assembled at Portsmouth, and at the wish of the present Bishop of St. Alban's, then Canon Jacob, Vicar of Portsea, who was one of the secretaries, I was asked to read a paper on my work in connection with the navy. I am not quite sure, but I believe I was one of the first ladies thus honoured, although it is delightful to read the gifted speeches of ladies at these assemblies nowadays. I cannot say whether I was a curiosity or not, but I secured an audience quite disproportionate to my merits. The hall was crowded with clergy and others, and they seemed much interested in the account that I was able to give.

An outcome of this meeting was a great gathering of naval men in our large hall at the Sailors' Rest in the interests of Social Purity. The then Bishop of Newcastle, Dr. Ernest Wilberforce, afterwards Bishop of Chichester, was in the chair, and several of the Congress speakers spoke as they alone could. The Royal Naval Purity Society was the fruit of this notable gathering of service men.

The proverb, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," is true, when one is giving out one's best in brain and muscle in any cause ; a little respite is needed sometimes to keep the machine in good trim. And the years of unremitting work had left its mark upon myself and Miss Wintz ; true, we had our quarters on the edge of Dartmoor for short rests, but that was about all, and the time seemed to have come for a real rest.

Our thoughts naturally turned to the "playground of Europe," Switzerland, dear to Miss Wintz as her birthplace. We were able at last to make all neces-

sary arrangements, and, on a morning never to be forgotten, we started for Dover. The crossing safely accomplished, the all-night journey to Bâle commenced. I had never been in Switzerland, and a snow mountain was a sight I had never seen.

In those old days railway carriages were not what they are now, and certainly the seats of the Calais-Bâle Express were something like the pebble beach at Portland, and left painful reminiscences. But I shall never forget the early dawn as we entered Switzerland.

At last Bâle was reached, and after breakfast we started for Schaffhausen and the Falls of the Rhine. It was nearly as interesting to myself as to Miss Wintz to walk once more in the grounds that had belonged to her family, and to stand on the terrace of the old Château where she first saw the light, looking over a view unique in all respects. The Château of Laufen looked dark and grim on the opposite side, and the beautiful country was framed in by the snowy range of the Bernese Oberland.

We stayed two or three days, looking up the old town house and family records in Schaffhausen, and finally left for Lucerne, not allowed to pay anything, for the landlord said "it was an honour to entertain a member of the old family." Arrived at Lucerne, we took steamer up the lake to a sweet little spot on the Axenstrasse, called Tell's Platte. The Uri Rothstock, and other grand mountains, among which thunder often rolled during our short stay, rose before us, and the lake in all its beauty lay below us. At the head of the lake was the town of Fluelen, fenced in by the St. Gothard Pass.

A trip up the Rigi was one of our pleasures, the little cogged railway carriages taking us to the top, and the sunrise next morning is stored away among life's memories. The magnificent panorama of snow mountains and the glorious tints must be seen to be believed, and also the grotesque appearance of the visitors, wrapped in blankets, &c., gathered to see it.

We were anxious to go over the Furka Pass to the Rhone Valley, for we were bound for the Eggishorn, and, as a returning waggonette was also anxious for a fare, we started *viâ* Andermatt, the Devil's Bridge, and Goschenen. We toiled on, until at last on that hot day in August we got to perpetual snow at the top of the Pass, and oh, the air! sal-volatile was nothing to it.

The next day was as entirely on the down grade, as the day before had been on the up grade, past the Rhone Glacier, and on to Visp, where we paid off our waggonette, and began the long climb to the Eggishorn Hotel, to which we were bound.

Here we stayed a week, making an ascent of the Sparrenhorn, from which we had a nagnificent view. We also made an excursion to the Aletsch Glacier and Marjolen See. This was our first glacier experience, and the roping together, the narrow pathways we trod, with crevasses on each side, blue and deep, and then the little lonely sea-green lake, all took its place in our book of mental photographs.

Meanwhile we were drinking in health day by day from the mountain air. The valley of the Rhone, dark and blue, lay beneath us, and magnificent mountains—the Weisshorn, the Matterhorn, the Dent

du Midi, and others—towered up in front. I shall never forget a Bible-reading on the mountains, conducted by the Rev. E. W. Moore, one Sunday afternoon. The whole setting was so beautiful, our thoughts certainly were carried up to Nature's God. I am certain that not one of the large audience will ever cease to remember it.

Our next halt was Zermatt. There was no railway then, and we determined to walk to Stalden, with knapsacks, and on to Zermatt, which we did. Zermatt was different to all that we had seen; the weird, uncanny Matterhorn towering over it like a malevolent fiend, when seen in juxtaposition with the lovely Weisshorn clothed with snow. One expedition I can never forget—to the Riffel and Gornergrat. We started very early, and, as we were getting through the pine-woods, the sun rose. In a moment the great black peak of the Matterhorn glowed as with incandescent fire over and through the pine-trees, the tops of the Monte Rosa range put on the beautiful pink glow, while the valleys below were wrapped in purples and greys. We stayed for a night at the hotel, and, climbing to a high peak with some friends to see the sun set, we could not resist singing the Doxology with one accord.

The next morning was spent in rambling by the Gorner Glacier, and it very nearly came to pass that we never saw the sailors again. We got on the moraine, and in our ignorance embarked on the glacier. Presently we heard a loud report, and a crevasse opened almost under our feet. We made for the moraine, but, like a pistol shot, another cleavage occurred between ourselves and the shore.

There was nothing to do but to sit down, which we did, and waited until some gentlemen, with guides, came and delivered us ; and then we heard that the Gorner Glacier was moving on at a certain rate of progression, and was never the same two days together, and, indeed, was very dangerous to traverse even with guides. From Zermatt back to the valley of the Rhone, and thence by Villeneuve and the Lake of Geneva to Lausanne, and home again.

Two years later another short trip to Berne, Lake Thun, Interlaken, and Grindelwald completed our Swiss rambles. Our work has not allowed us to go out of England since, but our memories are stored with photographs of the lovely land of snows and glaciers, which will last all through life's journey.

The year 1887 was the Jubilee year, and all the empire rejoiced with the beloved Queen-Empress, honoured, respected, and, I may say, loved by the whole world. This date was signalised to us by a message from the then Crown Princess of Germany, our Princess Royal, that she would much like to come over from Osborne to see ourselves and the Sailors' Rest.

It was the first Royal visit that we had received, and, unused to Court etiquette, we were somewhat nervous, but the kind friendliness of the Crown Princess, and the deep interest that she showed in all the details of our work, soon put nervousness to flight.

She was delighted with the place, which she inspected minutely, enjoying a cup of coffee handed to her by Miss Wintz. As I guided her through the

reading-rooms, she noted the presence of a Bible on each table, among all the magazines and periodicals. Turning to me she said, "I'm so glad to see the Bible, the best book of all, among the papers, and I can also see that it has been well read." I told Her Royal Highness what I felt about the Bible. "Yes," she replied, "it is the crown of your work."

The cabins immensely delighted her, and she told me about her sailor son, Prince Henry of Prussia, and remarked that she must give a cabin for his sake. The cheque for thirty guineas duly followed, and the cabin stands there to this day. I can see her now as she was on that occasion, wonderfully young-looking in her yachting costume, bright and sunny. How little one thought of the dark clouds that were even then hovering on her horizon.

Expressing her pleasure and interest in all that she had seen, and promising to give Her Majesty, who was also much interested in the work, a full account, she said, as she bade me good-bye, in her bright impulsive way, "Ah, Miss Weston, if circumstances were different, how much I should like to work with you."

CHAPTER XIII

THE SHIP THAT NEVER RETURNED

THE opening of the last decade of the past century was signalised by the appointment of Admiral H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh as Commander-in-Chief at Devonport. The Duke, as a naval officer, had been interested in our work for many years, and had always encouraged me in it; but a terrible national catastrophe, which I call "the ship that never returned," drew us together in mutual work for our countrymen and women, and opened out new interests to myself and those with me.

On the 8th of November 1890, H.M.S. *Serpent* steamed out of Plymouth Sound for her distant station. She was a new ship, with all the latest improvements of the time; my helpers had been on board as she lay alongside in the dockyard, and had started good work among the ship's company, and we knew them well as they went in and out of the Sailors' Rest. We bade them good-bye as they left, full of bright prospects for the commission. As I passed through the dockyard gates a bluejacket was saying good-bye to his wife. "Cheer up, Nell," he said, as he kissed her; "take care of yourself and the kids, and I'll soon be home again."

The officers and ship's company of the *Serpent*

little knew that they were steering into the jaws of death. Sunday, November the 9th, passed as the ship sped on her course. Monday the 10th wore away, and the night settled down "black as a wolf's mouth," the ship plunging through the waves. The watch below were asleep in their hammocks, when all at once with a grating sound and a slight shock the ship struck, and then again with a violent shiver she crashed on the reef.

"On that awful night I was in the watch below," said one of the survivors; "when she struck there was a little confusion as the men rushed on deck, but in a moment they fell into order; not one flinched, every man obeyed the word of command and stood by the ship. The officers grouped together on the bridge, the men in the rigging or on deck.

"The next order was 'Lower the boats'; they were lowered, but instantly capsized. As a final resource the lifeboat was lowered, but she was seized like a toy by the mighty billows and was dashed to pieces. The Captain then spoke his last words: 'Save yourselves, men, the officers will stand by the ship.'"

The last sight seen by those who have returned was a sinking ship, the men washed out of the rigging wholesale, the officers standing on the bridge and going down as she settled under water. Young lives were given up, and death came suddenly and swiftly; they were only a few hours from old England, and their loved ones were sleeping peacefully while they struggled with death.

I shall never forget the shock at Devonport and throughout the country when the notice was posted

outside the dockyard and the Commander-in-Chief's office: "Total loss of H.M.S. *Serpent* with all on board." Crowds of widows and mothers rushed to the Admiral's office, and that Admiral was H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh; the day was dark and drizzly, typical November, and the wailing and weeping was terrible to see. The Duke came out bareheaded in the rain, and he told the poor sorrowful ones how much he sympathised with them, that he feared that the news was true, but all that could would be done. "He has a kind heart," said one poor soul; "I saw the tears fill his eyes as he was speaking to us."

The next day, true to his word, he summoned a meeting of those likely to take interest in such work and appointed his own committee. Miss Wintz and my workers meanwhile took immediate steps to search out the bereaved ones, and to help them immediately. When our seamen are drowned, as G. R. Sims truly says:—

> "'Tis not only the husband that's missing,
> 'Tis the children's daily bread."

The man's pay stops at once, the poor wife or mother is crushed or stunned, and it is during these early days of sorrow and destitution that help is most needed. For some months we worked on this committee, and I went through all the cases personally with the Duke, and can testify to his deep sympathy and practical business capacity, as we sifted all these matters.

Subscriptions flowed in, a *Serpent* Fund was raised, and was placed in the hands of the Soldiers' and

Sailors' Families Association. Not one penny of this fund was invested ; it has all been spent upon the people for whom it was collected, and is now almost, if not quite exhausted. A board of trustees was formed, and, by the Duke's wish, I was appointed a member.

Only three men out of 176 were saved that night—Gould, Luxon, and Burton ; young men all of them. They shall tell their own stories, as they told them to me in the Royal Naval Hospital, where they lay wounded and maimed.

Luxon grasped me by the hand as I stood by his bedside: "I'm one of your temperance boys," he said ; "I've never tasted strong drink. I was trained in H.M.S. *Ganges* in Falmouth, and joined the *Royal Naval Temperance Society* there, and then I came to Devonport, and the Sailors' Rest was a home to me. Aye, Miss Weston, I'm proud of the Boys' Medal that you gave me for sticking to temperance. Yes, I jumped overboard when Captain Ross gave the order, and I swam for life ; I'm a strong swimmer."

Seeing the young fellow's arm crooked and fixed, I asked the reason. "Well," he modestly said, "I was trying to save a shipmate, and I got my arm round him ; I struggled for nearly an hour, and lost all power in that arm because of his weight ; and then a big roller washed him out, and he sank, and this arm was useless."

As I looked at the stiffened arm, and the young boyish face, I thought that here was the stuff out of which heroes were made, and that useless arm seemed as great an honour as a Victoria Cross.

I moved on and stood by the side of another

survivor—Gould. He looked at me with the tears in his eyes.

"I never thought to see you again," he said, "but God has been very good to me; it's a miracle that I'm here, and it is God alone who has saved me. You ask me how I was saved; I will tell you. I was on watch and I had my cork jacket on; when I jumped into the sea I was whirled round like a top in the water, and I sank for the last time as I thought. My senses seemed to go, and yet I could think clearer than ever in my life. All my past stood before me, and all the good and all the evil that I had done, and plenty of the latter.

"And then, clear as a picture, I saw my mother, and she was praying for me; I began then to pray for myself. I prayed for the pardon of my sins through the blood of Jesus Christ, and I prayed that He would save my life. In a minute or two I was carried against a rock: how I clung to it, and lifted myself out of the water, and how I thanked God for answering my prayer. As I held firm to the rock the waves struck my legs with such force that I thought that they must be broken, and then, O horror! I felt the water rising; it was the tide.

"It rose to my waist, to my chest, to my neck. O God! was I doomed to be drowned after all? Still I prayed, for life is sweet to a man, and as I prayed the tide turned. I was saved.

"I took off my cork jacket, put it on the rock, and lying upon it in the midst of the storm, with the dead bodies of my shipmates washing past me, I slept from sheer exhaustion for hours. When I awoke I had no power in my limbs at all, but, by

moving them, I got a little life into them, and at last I waded and crawled ashore."

Burton was asleep, but I had heard enough from the other two men.

Nearly twenty years passed before I saw Gould again ; he was out of the service and in the employ of the Corporation of Plymouth. He told me that although he had been enticed away by bad companions after he had left the hospital, that the Good Shepherd had gone after him and had brought him back to God ; and as he told the story that I had heard so many years before, in the hall of the Sailors' Rest, to a great gathering of sailors and their friends, it was indeed a time of rejoicing to me.

I have been turning over the pages of my old diaries again, and I find that day after day, and year after year, Miss Wintz, Miss Brown, myself, and my devoted band of workers, went on steadily visiting ships, going from mess to mess, holding meetings on board, on the upper deck, in the flats, in the barbettes, anywhere.

I went on board a ship at Portsmouth, and asked permission to have a meeting at the "top-gallant forecastle." The boatswain's mate went round blowing his whistle, and calling, "Miss Weston's come on board, and is holding a meeting on the t'gallant fo'csle ; those that like can come, and those that don't like can stay away."

As I stood there I was surrounded in about two minutes by some seven hundred men. Two young fellows were running towards me to get within hearing, and I heard one say to the other, "Look alive, Bill, yer naval mother's come aboard, and she's

going to spin yer a yarn." I was listened to very attentively, and thanked at the close for the visit.

Then at the Sailors' Rest we had endless meetings for the men, and also for their wives and children. As to travelling, Miss Wintz and myself were constantly on the rail. She would not only supervise the great Sailors' Rests at Portsmouth and Devonport, but she would travel all over the country, organising meetings, returning to take up her work again, and to set me free to take these meetings which I accomplished, travelling by night very frequently, and speaking by day ; and yet, spite of all, we are well and hearty, and able to carry on our much loved work at the present time.

In the year 1892 the Naval Exhibition was held in London in the grounds of Chelsea Hospital, the forerunner of many another exhibition. We were asked to exhibit, and were allotted a very good place. We erected a cabin, full-size, fitted with its bed, &c., a lifelike figure of a bluejacket stood under a flagstaff with his telescope : the whole scene was realistic in the extreme.

We were also able to do something for the detachment of bluejackets told off for gun drill, feats of arms, &c. They wanted a sort of Sailors' Rest in the Exhibition grounds. I put up, with Miss Wintz's help and co-operation, a bungalow, close to the life-size model of the "old *Victory*." It was very pretty and picturesque, and the small garden in front was gay with scarlet geraniums and calceolarias. The flagstaff towered aloft, and the whole was roped in in naval fashion.

The building consisted of a very brightly fitted

restaurant, where tea, coffee, temperance drinks, confectionery, and food could be served at any time. A large reading and writing room, bright with pictures and lounges, filled the other side. Behind was a mess-room, where all the men on duty could sit down and dine. A small room I arranged for myself, and it was also used for Bible-reading and prayer. A cook's galley, with scullery and the usual offices, completed the minature Sailors' Rest. Outside there was a verandah, on which, when off duty, the men used to sit and smoke, and play their mandolines and banjos to the admiration of passers-by.

The place was a success all round, although we gained nothing by it, but rather lost. It was a great help and comfort to the men. I was in London with Miss Wintz nearly all the summer to see that all went well, and to help them in every way.

Many of the members of the Royal Family, brought by the Duke of Edinburgh, visited it, and were greatly delighted. Our present King, then the Prince of Wales, took an opportunity of presenting me to the Princess of Wales, now our gracious Queen, and the charm and kindliness of her welcome will never be forgotten.

This additional work was heavy, but when we heard from the men what a real home the little place had been, we were all thankful that we had been able to run it. Returning to Portsmouth and Devonport, we continued our ordinary work, with the addition of the claims of many widows and orphans.

One morning I received a note from the Duke, asking me to come to see him at Admiralty House.

He had a communication from Her Majesty the Queen to the effect that he had interested her so much in our work that she would like to do something to distinguish the Sailors' Rests, and also on the expiration of his command, not very far off, to give a cabin to the building.

I accepted both the kind offers with gratitude. In the first instance the Queen bestowed the title of "Royal" upon the Sailors' Rests, confirming it by Royal Warrant, and graciously saying "that it was a fitting title for a Royal work." This warrant was confirmed by King Edward VII. on his accession to the throne, so that we bear our title legally, and use the Royal Arms ; and we trust to be able to live up to it.

The cabin given by Her Majesty has been, and is, an unceasing source of delight to the men. The Queen took great personal interest in its fittings, and wished to present her likeness, asking which one of the many taken would please them most ? I held a solemn convention over this matter. Some voted for the celebrated picture of her late Majesty, in widow's cap, writing a letter. Another man carried all before him when he said, "That was not the likeness of the Queen at all ; there were plenty of widows in England, and they all wrote letters, but only one Queen ;" and turning to me, amidst loud applause, he said, "Would you tell Her Majesty this, Miss Weston, with our humble respects, and ask for one like a Queen—with a crown on her head and a sceptre in her hand ?"

I felt constrained to tell Sir Henry Ponsonby all about it, and he wrote back to say that the

letter had been read to the Queen, who was greatly amused, and ordered one of her Jubilee portraits, duly autographed, to be sent. The brass plate on the door bears the simple inscription chosen by herself: "Given by Queen Victoria, 1895." The bluejackets all want to sleep in the Queen's Cabin; sometimes a dozen will try to enter their names for one night. "It is good of her," said one bronzed fellow; "it shows how she thinks of us and cares for us."

A very important movement at this time, in which we played a considerable part, was a grand change and reform in the method of paying the Admiralty allotments, or "half-pay" as it was called, to the sailors' wives. Up to this time all the money was paid on a certain date at the pay office in the dockyard, and the women had to come to receive it personally. There were no cars, electric or horse, in those days, and no motor 'buses, and the poor women had many of them to walk for miles through rain or snow, carrying a child, to get to the yard in time to answer their names.

Wet through often, they had been known to faint in the waiting-room, or to get home only to go down with cold, rheumatism, and sometimes with pneumonia. Fortunately our restaurant was open to them, and they crowded in for hot tea or soup. If any woman had arrived too late at the dockyard she had to make the wearisome journey again on what was called "Recall Day." The system was a relic of the old navy, and utterly unsuited to modern times. Mr., now Sir Hudson, Kearley, M.P., brought the matter before the Admiralty, and finally

before Parliament, and a Royal Commission, of which Lord Farrer was president, was appointed to inquire into the matter at Devonport.

It was busy work getting the witnesses, sifting their evidence, and making all ready for the Commissioners ; but we succeeded, and both Miss Wintz and myself attended to give evidence, and to hearten up the witnesses, who were very much tempted to turn and fly when they found themselves in official quarters.

The result was all that we could desire. The system was entirely altered and the abuses done away ; and now every wife and mother drawing half-pay receives a Post-Office Order each month from the Admiralty that she can cash when she will at the nearest office, and the boon has been unspeakable.

CHAPTER XIV

SIGNALS OF DISTRESS

THE year 1893 will never be forgotten in naval annals, for on June 22nd H.M.S. *Victoria* foundered in the Mediterranean, rammed by H.M.S. *Camperdown* during a series of evolutions off the Syrian coast.

The fleet was a magnificent one, and was on this bright day steaming over a summer sea. Death seemed very far away. The Commander-in-Chief was an Admiral whose name was a household word for bravery and skill. An order was given, and in the attempt to carry it out the collision occurred that sent the *Victoria* to her doom. Struck by the *Camperdown*, she was cut nearly in two by her powerful ram. Orders were given and carried out with perfect discipline; there was no confusion, no panic; the doctors went to save the sick; the ship's police brought up the prisoners, and the call sounded for the men to "fall in on the port side of the deck."

They stood in serried lines, looking pale and anxious, the ship meanwhile filling and heeling over. But not a man tried to save himself until the order was given, and then many were more intent on saving others than in looking after them-

selves. The Admiral, Sir George Tryon, refused the life-belt that his coxswain brought him, and told him that while there was a chance he must save himself—the coxswain was drowned. A brave young midshipman, Mr. Lanyon, aide-de-camp to the Admiral, said "that his place was to die with his chief"—he was among the lost. A diver, encumbered by his dress, was set free by his chum—the chum was drowned, but the diver was saved.

"I never saw such a sight before," a petty officer wrote from the *Inflexible*. "The signalmen were carrying out their orders as if all was well, and as the ship went down they stood by the signals." I have a piece of the signal halliards that passed through the hands of these brave men as they calmly obeyed the last order and went down with the ship, standing at the post of duty. The chaplain of the *Victoria*, the Rev. S. D. Morris, R.N., was a brave, true man and an earnest Christian. A survivor of the disaster wrote to me, "We do miss our chaplain; he always had such a kind smile and word; every one loved him." Mr. Morris died as he had lived. He was last seen trying to rescue the sick.

On the tablet put up to his memory these words stand: "In the hour of danger and of death, when all were acting bravely, he was conspicuous for his self-denying and successful efforts to save the sick and to maintain discipline. Nobly forgetful of his own safety, he worked with others to the end, and went down with the vessel." An officer said, "When I last saw Mr. Morris he was standing by the men; then seeing escape impossible, as she

made the fatal plunge and I leaped from her, he folded his arms upon his breast, and looking up to heaven, his lips moving in prayer, he died."

The pluck and Christian character of these brave men is shown in various ranks. Another of our friends was a bright-eyed west-countryman named George Edgcombe. He came of a sturdy stock, and was trained for the navy at Devonport. We often used to see him at the Sailors' Rest as he came in with the tide of sailor boys that used to flow in and out of the building when they were ashore.

I was so glad when George signed the temperance pledge, and determined to keep his life free from the snare of drink, and it was pleasanter still to see him in our dining-room, with a number of boys, turning over the pages of the Sacred Volume and learning the way to heaven. At last the news came that he was drafted to H.M.S. *Victoria*, and away he went to Malta.

Some years ago now, after speaking to a large audience in Torquay, I noticed a working man and woman waiting to see me; the tears coursed down the mother's cheeks as she said: "Our George, before he went away, told us that we were to see you on the first opportunity. He said that you were a second mother to him, and the Sailors' Rest a second home. He did love you. We little thought when he went to join the *Victoria* that we should never see him again.

"When he went away he said, 'Cheer up, mother, I'm going by God's help to carry out what I learned at the Sailors' Rest, so that you and father shall

never be ashamed of me.'" As the mother poured out her heart sorrow, the father stood by clenching his hands, and forcing back his tears. "We love you," he said simply, "because our son loved you, and you taught him to trust and serve his Saviour. He was eighteen years old the day the ship went down, a fine fellow, though I say it, and our only son. I give him," he continued with a great effort, "to his God, his Queen, and his country. I am content. I shall see him by-and-by."

I could tell many more incidents, and also of the good work that was going on in the ship, where we had flourishing branches of the *Royal Naval Temperance Society* and of the *Royal Naval Christian Union*, but this must suffice. Death was sudden and unexpected, and after the ramming by the *Camperdown* the sea rushed in with fearful rapidity, and in a space of time, estimated at from ten to fifteen minutes, she settled forward, heeled over to the damaged side, turned bottom upwards, and carried down between three hundred and four hundred officers and men—

> "There is in the wide lone sea
> A spot unmarked, but holy;
> For there the gallant and the free,
> In his ocean bed lies lowly."

The great need at home was IMMEDIATE HELP. The husband or son gone, poverty, sometimes starvation, comes into the house at once, because naturally all pay ceases on the date of a man's death.

In the case of the *Victoria* the pay was monthly, and would have been due a few days after the

catastrophe ; but this money went down with the ship. When half-pay is made out through the Admiralty by the man to his wife or mother, and he dies on active service, there is a Greenwich pension for the wife and children, and a gratuity for the mother ; but when money is sent by remittance, the man sending the sum that he can spare by postal orders, the wife, not being on the Admiralty books, is not recognised, and unless she can absolutely prove by letter that she receives the money regularly she gets no Greenwich pension.

The widows and mothers crowded around us at Portsmouth. I had never witnessed such agony before, except in the case of the *Serpent*. The blow seemed too awful. Some utterly refused to believe it, others nearly lost their reason, one was partially paralysed. As they flocked to the Sailors' Rest we were turned for a time into a Government office, sending and receiving messages to and from the Admiralty, hourly, as to the life or death of son or husband. One poor mother, who had been apprised of her son's death, received the joyful news through ourselves that, owing to a similarity of names, her dear one was alive, and her joy almost killed her.

On Friday, June 23rd, the day after the ship was lost, we investigated the first case, and gave relief. In the case of the mother of one of the drowned men, whose rent was in arrears, the bailiffs were in the house a few days after the loss of the ship. We were able to save her home and, so to speak, to keep the roof over her head. Miss Wintz and myself organised a willing band of workers, and my friends

sent me in liberal help, amounting in the aggregate to £2778, 1s. 5d.

I shall never forget the scenes of sorrow in the stricken homes. As I went into the darkened rooms and saw widows or mothers sitting there in their sorrow, often reading the last letter from husband or son, and the little children crying around, I felt in the presence of such awful and crushing grief that all that I could do was to weep with them ; and the edge of the trial was the keener from the knowledge of the terrible fact that money had stopped, and credit had gone, with the bread-winner.

In a very few days I was pensioning one hundred families, which number soon increased. My desire was "to keep the wolf from the door" by a small weekly pension, until the Admiralty and national help should come. We opened a mourning depôt to help them in this way. Our correspondence with the clergy and others all over England was very large ; every case was sifted out, that our relief might be as wisely given as possible. Sad to say, several little ones were ushered into the world in these days of sorrow, and our funds were needed for doctors, clothing, and nourishment. I could tell many an anecdote from real life of grand endurance, noble heroism, and patient suffering, that would touch every heart.

The plan that I have adopted, and have followed out in the case of every naval catastrophe, is this—to send my workers instantly to visit all residing in Portsmouth, Devonport, or Chatham, and to communicate personally at once with all scattered over the country, with sympathy, and offer of help,

if needed, getting information from the clergy, ministers, and others able to give it. A sum of money is drafted from our own funds for use, until the special funds come in. In the case of the *Victoria* the Admiralty pensions commenced in August 1893, but those of the Royal Patriotic Commission not till November 1893, and in the case of mothers and dependent relations many were deferred until July 1894, one year after the loss of the ship.

My own relief goes on steadily until other help is available, and then ceases, to avoid overlapping; but, as I firmly believe in spending the principal of these funds on the people for whose benefit they are given, I clear out my special funds to the last halfpenny.

All services in my own case, and in that of my workers, have been gratuitous, and I have defrayed office expenses and postages. Of course, if this cannot be done, the liabilities of widows and mothers can be calculated to a fraction, office expenses of a reasonable character can be allowed for, and the fund spent upon the people for whom it was collected. This is, I believe, legal, and I am sure that it is reasonable.

When, after this date, a Royal Commission investigated the working of the Patriotic Fund, I was called as a witness, and gladly gave evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, taking up many widows of Crimean veterans who were in extreme distress, some in receipt of parish pay, while a large amount, many thousands of pounds, of Crimean and other funds was invested, and only the interest used. These old widows, most of

them over seventy years of age, gave their evidence in such strange surroundings with great self-possession, only asking that I would sit by them.

One old lady had been a nurse during the Crimean War, and had been in the trenches, and knew Miss Nightingale. She was ruled out because she had married the sergeant of her choice a month or so too late. "Seems hard," she said; "I would have married him sooner if I had known it, but it does seem bad to live on half-a-crown a week." Another said that "her husband had died for his country, and she was starving for her country," and so on. It was pathetic to see them, but the Patriotic Commission took them on their lists, and they rejoiced in a little more help.

Many ships have been lost since that date, or have never returned. H.M.S. *Condor*, whose name, painted in the stern-sheets of a boat, was about the only record; the *Doterel* in the distant Straits of Magellan; the *Cobra*, who broke her back on a rock in the North Sea; the *Lily*, sinking in a typhoon in the China Sea; the *Tiger* and the *Gladiator* off our own coast. These and many more tell us the sad truth that "*there's sorrow on the sea.*"

MY MOTHER.

CHAPTER XV

MY MOTHER

Some of the strongest and sweetest reminiscences of my life circle round my dear mother. I can truly say that I remember nothing but good of her, but I fear that no one could say this of me. Hers was a suffering life, a spinal affection keeping her on the sofa for many years, but she was always so cheerful and sunny that her sofa and sick-room were the brightest spots in the house. Her love for her husband and children may have often been equalled, but I am sure that it has never been surpassed.

She was intensely musical, and in her early life had lessons from the celebrated Dr. Crotch. She was a beautiful pianist, and had a sweet voice.

Indeed, when she was over eighty years of age, and nearly blind, she would sit down to the piano and strike the keys in a masterly manner, and, from memory, would sing airs from Handel's Messiah, Mendelssohn's Lieder, &c. Her interest and delight in my work never ceased, and I know that she followed me incessantly with her prayers.

After my father's death she continued to live at Ensleigh, the house that he had built, and the two little grandsons that came, Harry and Jack, were a great solace to her. From time to time I used

to go home for a few days, and very happy times they were—of rest to me, and of pleasure to her. I told her of all my successes and my difficulties, as one can only tell to a mother. She was the tie that bound me principally to our home, which was broken up, and so ceased to be home, when she passed away.

She was of firm and decided character. When over seventy years of age she heard Archdeacon Basil Wilberforce plead the temperance cause eloquently in the Guildhall at Bath. He spoke very strongly upon the example that Christians should set in abstaining from alcohol on behalf of their weaker brothers and sisters; and although she had taken a small quantity of stimulant all her life, by doctor's orders, she then and there determined, for Christ's sake, to set as clear an example to others as possible.

So at the close of the lecture she went forward and signed the pledge, giving up alcohol, and taking to milk. She lived to the age of eighty-five, and no ill effects, but rather the reverse, followed. The loss of her sight by cataract was a great trial to her, as were other infirmities of old age, but her spirit was bright and cheerful, and her faith in her Saviour, and love to Him, carried her over all the roughness of the path.

Very painlessly, after a slight attack of bronchitis, she passed away on January 31, 1895. Her illness was thought so little of that, as I was down with influenza at the time, I was not summoned to her.

My sister, who lived with her, nursed her with devoted care, and despatched the message to me telling me that she had been called home. Many

reading this know the blank when the mother passes away, and I need not say that the trial was very severe to me ; but I rejoice now in the thought that I have both my parents in the land of light, and that in God's time I shall go to them.

I shall not easily forget the journey from Plymouth to Bath for her funeral, during the tremendous frost of 1895. In the railway carriage the windows were not only hard frozen, but one's breath came down like snow. Miss Wintz, who followed me next day, could scarcely get through. The snow was deep, and the frost tremendous ; and in this Arctic weather we laid my dear mother to rest in Lansdown Cemetery, by the side of my father, and when we returned it was to an empty home.

A few days later we left for Portsmouth, my sister accompanying us, to share a small country house about seven miles from Portsmouth, at Waterloo. My two nephews, one of whom was then in the army, were with me, and the youngest, Jack, who was at Malvern College, adopted it as his home during the holidays.

About this time I became greatly interested in the work of the British Women's Temperance Association, headed by Lady Henry Somerset. Our sailors' wives had long wanted to join some society, and at that date they were not eligible for the *Royal Naval Temperance Society*. I inquired into the working of the B.W.T.A., and the result was that we became a naval branch.

A band of most able and noble-minded women were at the head of the Association—Lady Henry Somerset, Miss Willard, Mrs. Pearsall Smith, Miss Gorham, Miss Agnes Slack, the Hon. Mrs. Bertrand

Russell, and others. I had the pleasure of giving them some personal help by speaking for them in Plymouth, London, Chester, Edinburgh, Oxford, &c. I can only say that I gained more than I gave. I was specially interested in Duxhurst, the farm colony started by Lady Henry Somerset for the reclamation of inebriate women; the plan seemed so sensible and well-thought-out, that it made a fresh departure, which is followed now in various places.

When the village was built, it occurred to myself and to the temperance bluejackets around me, that it would be very nice if the navy could raise the sum of money necessary to build a cottage. Ship after ship took up the matter, and the money flowed in, and shortly enough was raised not only to build the cottage, but also to furnish it.

It was a proud moment for our naval temperance men when, on H.R.H. the Duchess of Teck laying the foundation-stone, two representatives, a bluejacket and a Royal Marine, were able to place the cheque and a purse of money upon that stone. The cottage has done good service, and I hope will continue to do so for many years to come.

While at Edinburgh, in the autumn of 1896, helping the "British Women," I paid a visit to H.M.S. *Caledonia*, lying in the Firth of Forth, close to the great bridge. The boys crowded in their hundreds. The captain and officers stood by me on the quarter-deck, and I hope that many young lives were influenced on that day for good. The *Caledonia* is now non-existent, and the boys, as seamen, are serving all over the navy.

After this work I returned to Portsmouth, and plunged into my ordinary routine, and I little thought of an event which was soon to happen, and which stopped all my activities for some time. I was fond of my bicycle, and was a very fair rider.

One day in November 1896 I was riding about on Southsea Common, and, turning down the Western Parade, the front wheel became accidentally fixed in the tram-line as I tried to avoid a cab; in a moment the bicycle was over, and I was in the road, having heard the bone of my left leg snap like a carrot, and, worse still, seeing that bone force its way out—it was just above the ankle. Two gentlemen most kindly ran to my rescue, and lifted me with the utmost care, placing me in the open cab that I had tried to avoid. I could only say, "To the hospital as fast as you can." I shall never forget the mortal agony of that drive, as the man whipped up his horse, and at last landed me at the door of the accident department of the Royal Portsmouth Hospital. I was lifted out and carried in on a stretcher, and doctors and nurses, including the matron, were soon around me.

I remember the cutting off of shoe and stocking, and I felt so thankful that I was in the hands of Mr. Rundle, one of the best surgeons in Portsmouth. Those that have passed through the ordeal of the setting of a compound fracture know what it is. When the leg had been set, in kindness to help me to bear the reaction and to keep me from fainting, I heard the whispered order, "Give her some brandy."

I do not look upon the taking of alcohol as a sin when given as a medicine, but I thought of many men, and women too, to whom it was a great temptation ; they had, I knew, been helped by my example, and would be discouraged and thrown back if I took the brandy, perhaps not knowing the circumstances under which it was administered. So I said, "Please give me hot milk." And that milk, acting as a stimulant, gave me all the spur that I needed.

I remained in the hospital, in a private ward, for two months. It was a novel experience to me to be fixed flat, with a plank under the mattress, and the leg in steel splints, the cradle over all. I thought at first that I could not bear it, and that to lie like that for a month would drive me out of my mind ; and then the sweet sense of the presence of God filled my heart with a blessed calm, and in the surrender of the will to Him came rest and blessing. I would not have exchanged that hospital bed for a king's palace.

For some days blood-poisoning was feared, but that passed by, and gradually the bones united. My bluejacket friends came to see me, and their sorrow was very touching. The Flag-Lieutenant brought me beautiful flowers from the Admiral, and kind inquiries came from Royalty.

It was a terrible shock to Miss Wintz, but she bore up bravely ; and Miss Brown and my fellow-workers did all that they could to carry on the work. Christmas passed in hospital. I was aroused on Christmas morning by a sweet concert outside my door, the nurses singing Christmas Carols, and my

room was full of presents from the Christmas tree and from friends from far and wide.

It was a critical moment when the doctors first examined me to see if the bones had united, and also as to whether I should ever walk again, except as a cripple. But all was right, and on a glorious morning in January 1897 I was carried down again, placed in a chair, and wheeled to Southsea, where I was ordered to remain awhile for sea air.

Slowly, very slowly, recovery and walking power returned, and April saw me in our little home at Waterloo on crutches, but listening to the nightingales and rejoicing in the spring flowers.

And so all things worked together for good. For the verdict of the doctors ran thus: "From this compulsory rest you will gain ten years more of working life than you would otherwise have had." And their prophecy has come true. And I met with the most enthusiastic and loving reception from the bluejackets and their wives, both at Portsmouth and Devonport, when I was in full working trim again.

CHAPTER XVI

MY SILVER WEDDING

AFTER twenty-five years married people celebrate a silver wedding, and it rightly marks an epoch in a life of real and loyal love, service, and companionship, a radiant fulfilment of a promise made in the morning of life.

The year 1898 marked such an epoch in my own experience. Twenty-five years before, in 1873, I had heard a call, I believe from God, urging me to go forth from my home, and to give my life for the good of the navy. I was called to the great naval arsenal of Plymouth, in the beautiful county of Devon, as I have already described in this story of my life among the bluejackets, and I went to the port with which the names of Drake, Raleigh, and a hundred naval heroes are bound up, and from which the Pilgrim Fathers set sail to help in founding the great Republic across the water; to this port my steps were led by an unseen Power.

How much had happened in those twenty-five years; a great work stood around me, which extended throughout the navy, and by which thousands of lives had been influenced. Two splendid piles of buildings housed over a thousand bluejackets each night. The money had been sent to enable the

ROYAL NAVAL BARRACKS, DEVONPORT: A R.N.T.S. MEETING.

buildings to be carried out. The first Sailors' Rest at Devonport was the outcome of a bluejacket's wish, and a bluejacket's prayer. All seemed so amazing, and I was so utterly incompetent, that my only feeling was, "*to God be the glory.*"

Twenty-five years before I met one who has been the help, solace, and inspiration of my life. Bright, sunny, and in the heyday of youth and health, she too counted the cost of the work and gave herself to it; and together we have met the storms, and rejoiced in the success.

For thirty-six years now we have been sailing in the same ship, of one heart and one soul, our only desire being to do God's work and will among our gallant bluejackets as long as health and strength are given to us; but the year of our silver wedding happiness was marred in our family circle by the death of a sister of Miss Wintz, Mrs. T. T. Wing. She always, both before her marriage and after it, took the deepest interest in our work, and her husband gave it the kindest help; I felt that I had lost a sister when she passed away.

As I look back I feel that my silver wedding chronicles twenty-five years' work among our sailor lads; this work has always been one of our sheet anchors.

Why do men call me "mother," that sweetest of all names? Why do they write, as a man wrote to me in 1908, from a ship-of-war on a foreign station?

"I have known you since 1881, shortly after I joined the navy; you addressed us boys on board H.M.S. *Lion*, and when I saw you I said to another

boy, 'Is that the lady they call mother?' 'Yes,' was the reply. 'Well, she's got a mother's face,' and I say it now though I'm a man.

"You have been more than a mother to many of us; God bless you with health and strength to carry on your work. I do feel certain that each Sunday, as you see the boys flocking round you, when they come ashore from their training ships, that you are happy as you feel 'I will be their mother; I will try to instil good thoughts into their minds; this shall be their home when they are ashore, and I will make things bright and cheerful for them.' You did all this for me; can you wonder that you are called mother?"

An incident occurred during the silver wedding year that was worth untold gold to me. A comely-looking woman asked to speak to me; she said, "I have come some distance to see you and to thank you for your kindness to my boys; I have seven sons, every one of them in Her Majesty's service. The Sailors' Rests have been homes to them, and have led them into all that's good. You have got my youngest boy now; he would follow his brothers, and he is in the *Impregnable*. I say from the bottom of a mother's heart, God bless you and the Sailors' Rests."

These pages, torn from my diary of this year, make very pleasant reading, and are as music in my heart, and have continued to cheer me, although as I write these reminiscences I have left the silver wedding far behind, and am going on towards the golden one.

During the silver wedding year we had a visit

from Admiral H.R.H. Prince Henry of Prussia ; he was as much interested in our work and in the Sailors' Rests as his royal mother had been, and he too gave us a cabin at Portsmouth, remarking that "the Royal Sailors' Rests were truly Imperial institutions."

The German Government, the United States Navy Board, and the Japanese Government, each and all, sent representatives to get every information as to our organisation and management, which we were only too glad to give them ; we threw ourselves into this pleasant work, hoping that the inquiries might result in the founding of such houses all over the world, which has been the case.

The Japanese authorities hoped that I would visit Japan to inspect the houses that their Government had started in all their large ports, and I found that a booklet that I had written on the working of Sailors' Rests, called "*Under the Searchlight*," had been translated into Japanese, and published by order of the Government and largely circulated in their navy ; all these pleasant things brightened my silver wedding year.

But storm-clouds were gathering in the political horizon, and war in South Africa seemed almost certain. The thunder was growling ominously in the distance, and the cry was "Bluejackets to the front." I paid a farewell visit to H.M.S. *Terrible* before she left ; one thousand men were to be landed from her and one thousand from H.M.S. *Powerful*, besides contingents from other ships. How nobly the men of the navy and army behaved belongs to a later date.

That year H.M.S. *Ocean* was launched from the Royal Dockyard at Devonport, and the First Lord of the Admiralty kindly gave me a ticket for the Royal Enclosure on the launching platform. It was a picturesque and beautiful ceremony; the launching of a ship is always something unique. The thousands of spectators, the enormous vessel, her bows garlanded with flowers, the bright shining water beyond.

On this occasion the ship was to be launched by H.R.H. the Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll. The Royal and official party made a brilliant group. The silken cord, the chisel and mallet were all there; but first and foremost every head was bared when the choir sang the sailors' hymn, and the prayers were offered up. Then there was a silence, only interrupted by the dull thud of the knocking away of the dog shores, broken by the electric bell ordering all the men out from under the ship.

The Princess, having accepted the mallet and chisel in a beautifully carved oak box, placed the chisel on the cord and cut it by one blow, at the same time striking the garlanded bottle of wine against the bows, with the words, "Her Majesty's Ship *Ocean*, may God bless her, and all who may sail in her."

There followed a few moments of tense suspense, then the mighty mass quivered and began imperceptibly to move, cheers broke from thousands of throats, the band struck up "Rule Britannia," and in less time than it takes to write it, the great ship slid down the ways, plunged into her own

element, and brought up for the first time at her own moorings.

The Princess very kindly asked me about my work, expressing her deep interest, and listening to the details that I was able to give her. I have known H.M.S *Ocean* well since, and a great deal of good work has been done, and is still doing, on board her, and heartily do I re-echo the wish expressed, "God bless the *Ocean* and all who sail in her."

Another honour was accorded us which I must chronicle in the silver wedding year, which was a visit from H.R.H. the Duchess of York, now H.R.H. the Princess of Wales. The Duchess had been interested in my work by the mother who was so dear to her, H.R.H. the Duchess of Teck, known and beloved all through her life, which was spent in doing good.

I shall never forget one afternoon that I spent at the White Lodge, Richmond Park; I was able to open my mind freely to my royal hostess, and to tell many things that I should probably have told no one else; she entered into everything with such whole-hearted sympathy. Her admiration of the navy was very great, and she was amused and touched at the stories that I was able to tell her from real life.

She showed me photographs of her two grandsons, and promised to present a beautiful robe, worked by our sailors' wives, to her daughter on the advent of the next baby. I remember her taking me into her study and telling me, with tears in her eyes, how much she missed her daughter, "the Princess May," who used to share the study

with her, and not only the study, but all her pursuits and interests. The whole country mourned when that noble-hearted royal lady went home.

The daughter, whose presence was so missed at the White Lodge, expressed a wish to visit the Royal Sailors' Rest at Portsmouth. We had the building gaily dressed with flags, and as soon as she arrived hoisted the Royal Standard (the custom then when Royalty was present), and a guard of honour of bluejackets awaited her.

It was an honour and a joy to me indeed to receive her, and her kind cordiality banished all nervousness at once. I remember a kindly little remark as she asked me to sit by her in our drawing-room. Her eyes lighting on a bouquet of white roses, she said: "You have thought of everything, not excepting the York roses."

She was so pleased to hear from us the account of all that was going on. The next move was to inspect the building, and a long inspection it was, the Duchess asking many questions about all the various departments of the work. One of our last visits was to the sailors' wives' workroom. Several of them were there, and I shall not forget the kindliness with which she greeted each one, telling them that "she herself was a sailor's wife," and speaking of the embroidered robe that they had sent. The visit seemed all too short, and cheers followed her as she drove away.

I feel that it is a great honour to be able to place the name of our kind visitor at the head of our *Royal Sailors' Rest Needlework Guild.* This Guild is for the help of the wives of stokers and young

seamen, whose pay is necessarily small. Each member sends a contribution of two garments a year, and as many more as she likes. These are sold to the women at a very small price at our large weekly meetings of sailors' wives, and are a boon indeed. Children's clothing, babies' clothing, &c., &c., all are welcome. Our membership is large, no fee is needed for entrance, only the name and address.

Our Royal President always sends us a nice box every Christmas containing her contribution to our needs, and also toys for the children; while the Prince of Wales kindly adds a gift from himself.

CHAPTER XVII

"SAY 'AU REVOIR' BUT NOT GOOD-BYE"

THESE words were sung by bluejackets of the Naval Brigade leaving Southampton by the R.M.S. *Briton* on a dark November evening. They were going out to South Africa, and at the time the outlook there was dark and heavy. I was anxious to wish them "Good-bye," so Miss Wintz and myself took train to Southampton, and arrived in the docks before the tender had got half-way up Southampton Water.

The captain of the great steamer was most sympathetic, and from the upper deck we watched the little vessel, with her freight of brave men, steaming along. As they drew alongside and made fast, the men looked up, and seeing me, they said, "There she is; she's coming with us after all." I could almost have wished that I had been bound for South Africa, but I was better at home, and could do more for them.

It was very pleasant visiting them on their mess deck, which was roughly but comfortably fitted up, talking to them personally, receiving last messages and letters to post after they had left. I felt that, permission granted, I should like to speak a few parting words to them. They were lined up on deck, and we stood face to face, some of us for the last time.

I spoke to them as to their duty—they were keen for that — and then about wives, children, and mothers, and I promised, God helping me, that I would stand in their places as far as I could to their dear ones, if they should give their lives for their country. A deep-murmured "God bless you" ran up and down the lines.

I also told them that we should be communicating with them by letter, and that we should send them *Ashore and Afloat* and the *Blue Backs* regularly, and any other comforts that they might want. And then we talked of higher and holier things still—of Him who lived and died for them, and the desire that we might all be good soldiers of Jesus Christ and faithful unto death.

All too soon the call began to sound for visitors to leave the ship. A large number of military men were going out, and the parting between husbands and wives, mothers and sons, and the clinging clasp of the little children round father's neck were heart-rending to see. The last call went, and we moved down the gangway, shaking hands with as many as possible, and in answer to the request, "Don't leave till we go," we promised to stay.

We shall not easily forget the long wait on the pier, on that dark, drizzly November evening: the last mail bags were being shipped, and the delay seemed interminable. The bright spot was the big ship, glowing with electric lights. The crowd waited, each one with eyes intent on husband, son, or friend; presently there was a hush, the ship had cast off, and she seemed to back from the wharf.

As the tug unseen by us moved her huge bulk,

the band struck up "God save the Queen," and the last adieux were shouted; the bluejackets had mounted the rigging and they called to Miss Wintz and myself, "Good-bye and God bless you," then "Three cheers for the dear old Sailors' Rest," and as the distance widened between the ship and the shore, they broke out into the song, of which the refrain is "*Say Au Revoir, but not Good-bye. . . .*" And the big liner steamed away down Southampton Water, and we returned home.

Brave fellows, both sailors and soldiers! at the call of Queen and Country, they had left all dear to them to go to a foreign shore to endure untold hardships, and to die, many of them, of wounds and sickness.

How many deeds of heroism have been chronicled about our Naval Brigade in the terrible South African war, how they marched shoulder to shoulder with our soldiers, how the Royal Marines earned the title at Graspan of the "bravest of the brave," and Jack that of the "Saviour of the Empire" at Ladysmith. The 4.7 gun came up at the nick of time, and the men behind the gun so served her, that she spoke terror to her enemies.

The muster roll of brave deeds would take a long time to call over, and the muster roll of the gallant and sainted dead is longer still. A bright young fellow in the Royal Marine Light Infantry, named Barnes, who used to frequent our Sailors' Rest at Portsmouth, and was a member of the Seamen's and Marines' Bible-class, was in the ship's company of H.M.S. *Powerful*. She had been ordered home from China, having done her three years' commission, when suddenly, like one of its

own thunderstorms, although the distant growling had been going on for some time, the South African war broke out.

A cable message stopped the *Powerful* on her homeward voyage, and her brave sons were ready to do their duty without a murmur. The detachment of the Naval Brigade that fought at the battle of Graspan, or Enslin, as it was afterwards called, was principally composed of Royal Marines. Private Barnes' letters to his mother are very touching. I give some extracts from them :—

"It will no doubt surprise you to hear we are coming home round the Cape instead of *viâ* Suez. But I just think it is the hand of God leading us through. There is a bit of a war going on in South Africa, and it will probably detain us a little at the Cape. The fighting is going on right away inland. I should very much like to be up at the front, but the Admiralty will not sanction a Naval Brigade landing. I do hope you will not worry over me at all, as I am very anxious to go to the seat of war and fight manfully for my Queen and country, and you must remember that if I did get shot I should leave this world of trouble and go to be with Jesus in heaven, which is far better."

And then in another letter he writes :—

"Dear Mother and Father,—No doubt this news will upset you, but I am really happy and pleased. We (the Marines) are going up to the front to-morrow ; we shall be in the fighting lines, but if I am shot I hope to meet you all in heaven, where my Lord Jesus will take me to the mansions He has prepared for me."

In another letter he writes from Stormberg Camp:—

"Well I can say I am perfectly happy, as Jesus is on my side, and I am very pleased I am up at the front. We (eight of us) have a nice prayer-meeting every night."

In his last letter he writes:—

"Well, I can still say I am perfectly happy, as I am still on Jesus' side, and He makes me to be peaceful and happy. There is no need for anxiety over me, so do not worry; I am in God's hands. God bless you all. Praise God I am still happy, and I am hoping to have a large Gospel meeting in camp to-morrow. Good-bye, and God bless you."

Then, by way of a final farewell, on a piece of stamp edging on the back of the envelope he wrote:—

"The Lord is my shepherd, I will not fear."

The men of the *Powerful*, on landing, were dispersed. Some went to Ladysmith, the remainder were brigaded with men of other ships, and with the army under General Lord Methuen and General Sir Redvers Buller.

The day of the battle of Graspan dawned; our young private kneeled in prayer, commending his soul to God. After fighting bravely he fell, but in a moment he was on his feet again, charging forward. Another bullet, this time a more serious wound, laid him low. His mates told his mother that, as he lay there, he was continually praying, and so passed away on the field of battle.

Of episodes from that war, of bravery, self-sacrifice, trust in a living Saviour and true Christianity, volumes

might be written. The late G. W. Steevens, the brilliant and lamented newspaper correspondent, in his book "From Cape Town to Ladysmith," gives a graphic account of the gallant band of bluejackets who, with their 4.7 gun, were the means of saving the place. He describes their enthusiasm, brightness, and unflagging energy as a stimulant that helped every one, and he concludes, "Verily the bluejackets are the salt of the sea, and the salt of the earth as well."

A correspondent from Frere Camp writes:—

"The Naval Brigade men are simply invaluable. Officers and men have won the warm regard of every one in the camp. What particularly excites enthusiasm is the cheerfulness of the bluejackets and their tireless endurance of hardship and danger."

All the time that the war was going on we were hard at work at the Royal Sailors' Rests; in response to my appeal comforts of all kinds were given to us for the men, and we sent out tons and tons of things. By special favour the cases that we sent were forwarded to the front at once, and the men's delight at being remembered was very great. I sent out large numbers of books and papers to the soldiers, there was such a demand for them; and it was delightful to hear from those who were able to follow them to minister to their bodily and spiritual needs how much good work was done during that time of carnage.

As Christmas drew near it occurred to one of us that a Christmas pudding for each man of the Naval Brigade would be a nice little present. Messrs. Peak, Frean & Co. carried out the order, and the

puddings went off, each in its tin, "With Miss Weston's good wishes," in time to reach the front. They were passed on and were not hung up anywhere. A bronzed bluejacket on his return said to me:—

"Directly Ladysmith was relieved you were outside the gates, and those puddings they were just splendid after living so long on mealies and mule flesh. We said, 'Mother is here, and knows just what we want.' They made the same remark as tobacco and other gifts were served out."

I must try to remember a visit I paid to the *Powerful*. It is fresh and clear in my memory now. As the great ship steamed in she received a splendid ovation from the thousands that lined the beach, and when once berthed alongside what a rush there was of wives, mothers, and children to receive the doughty warriors back.

As soon as possible I was on the quarter-deck, asking permission of the Commanding Officer to allow me once again to say a word to the Naval Brigade; permission was cordially given, and the notice was piped around the ship "that I had come on board and wanted to speak a few words of welcome to the brave fellows." I shall not forget that muster—the bronzed, war-stained faces that I looked into, also the pale drawn faces, fresh from enteric fever and the sick bay, and the bandaged arms and legs; the picture was too touching for anything. I said a few words to them and they broke into hearty cheers, with "God bless you, you never forgot us."

Afterwards we talked together, and I heard many more episodes. "That Graspan affair was a warm

'un, and no mistake," said one man ; " we swarmed up at dead of night, unsuspecting, and my word, how they peppered us, opening fire at a thousand yards. We wheeled right and left ; I was in the left company ; here we lost our commander, shot through the heart. Yes, and Midshipman Huddart ; there's stuff for you ! just a boy, shot three times, and up again with the best of them, till he dropped. I don't think we've changed much since Nelson's days.

" At 200 yards we fixed bayonets, and we just saw their heels ; they didn't wait when they heard the rattle. Queen's Chocolate ? Yes, it came on Christmas Day, and so did your plum-puddings. Got my Queen's box ? Aye, and the stuff inside, too, though it was hard to keep the lid shut once or twice when rations were very short, but we minded who it came from." Thus did the brave son of Neptune rattle on ; others were so weak that they could not talk much.

One man, a leading stoker, who had been wounded in the head by a splinter from a shell, said, " When the ship first came in I wanted to send a wire to mother. I wrote the message, and, would you believe it, I couldn't remember the address, do what I would, my head was so queer ; and I actually said to the telegraph clerk, ' You write the address, won't you ; my memory's gone since that knock on the head. I can't remember where my mother lives ; but I'm nearly all right now. I am going home, and I shall see her to-night.' " Letters came showering in to me all through the Boer War from mothers, wives, sisters, sweethearts, and friends, all

wanting details as to the welfare of their dear ones, or broken-hearted at the news of death or wounds.

Our Temperance and Christian Union men fought both in South Africa and China. Mr. Wright, R.N. Gunner, was specially mentioned in despatches by General Sir Redvers Buller for conspicuous gallantry; I know him well. Another brave fellow, secretary of the "*Tartar*" branch of the Royal Naval Temperance Society, was taken prisoner when the armoured train was knocked to pieces, and was shut up for months in Pretoria.

Sergeant Gill, of the Royal Marine Artillery, a friend of many years' standing, a good worker, and an earnest Christian, was wounded five times in one of the engagements; he got up after each wound and pushed on; the last bullet smashed his arm, and he could do no more. When in hospital the sisters wrote to me, telling me of the wounded artilleryman who went round the wards cheering the men and pointing them to the Saviour. They said, "We lost a chaplain when he went away." He was spoken of as a brave man, a good sergeant, and an earnest Christian, and he is all this, and he has proved it since by the help that he has given to my work among the men of the Royal Marine Artillery at Eastney.

During the South African War I brought out special editions of my *Blue Back* and *Ashore and Afloat*. They were called "War Editions," and were sent freely for distribution to the "Tommies" as well as the "Jacks." The soldiers were immensely taken with them, and to this day we send regularly to many regiments. They are distributed

by the chaplains and others, and they carried a message from God to many a heart, and brightened many a weary hour in the hospital tent. Miss Wintz has, with unwearied patience, carried out the heavy work of editing *Ashore and Afloat* ever since it was started ; and she continues her labour of love now, asking no fee or reward but the interest of the men, which she generally has, for they look eagerly for the paper every month.

"The ship's company want to know what they have done that you should stop our *Ashore and Afloat*," wrote an indignant petty officer the other day, from a distant station. The fault was soon remedied, as it lay in the mail and not in ourselves ; but such indignation was pleasant reading to the hard-worked editor. So, whether in South Africa or anywhere else, the paper is eagerly looked for.

To South Africa we continued to forward goods sent, but we classified them, and did not send mittens to men in the tropics, as Sir Frederick Treves humorously remarks ; but socks, handkerchiefs, stationery, pipes, cigarettes, soap, shirts, meat lozenges, chocolate, bovril, &c., &c., were all included in our cargo, together with Bibles, Gospels, and hymn-books. We worked very hard, and box after box was sent forward.

We distributed between three or four thousand pounds' worth of goods, and all were gratefully received. Letters came from commanding-officers, nurses, soldiers, sailors, all so delighted to be remembered in Old England, and so thankful to get the useful articles.

About this time, after considerable improvements,

we re-opened the Royal Sailors' Rest at Keyham, Devonport. Since then we have greatly enlarged it, adding a great many cabins. It is very bright and cheery, and the men are so fond of it.

It was re-opened by Admiral Sir Henry Fairfax, then the Commander-in-Chief at the port. I had known him for many years, and also Lady Fairfax, who has ever been a kind and true friend. The Royal Sailors' Rest at Keyham is opposite the gates of His Majesty's Steam Yard, with its great dock accommodation, now completed, after an expenditure of many millions of money. And it is only a few minutes' walk from the Royal Naval Barracks.

We have a grand strategic position there, the purchase including the freehold, and the building has cost about £6000. I have pulled down the old building, and now we have a Sailors' Rest that is a model of completeness, not a foot of ground wasted ; restaurant, dining and reading rooms, smoking room, kitchen, baths, lockers, and cabins—pictures of comfort; a cosy bed, a strip of carpet, pictures and text on the walls, fresh air and light.

The Commander-in-Chief spoke most warmly and kindly on behalf of the officers of the navy, saying that they were deeply grateful for the magnificent homes, replete with every comfort, that we had provided for the British bluejackets, and what a joy it was to him to open this place that had been doing good work for years on a small scale, and now had commenced a new lease of its existence. This is true, and the sequel has shown more clearly than ever how much it was wanted.

The China War which broke out made a heavy

drain upon our navy, and I bade farewell to nearly a thousand seamen and marines, who were leaving England for China on board the transport *Jelunga*. The Commander of the detachment was very kind, and told me that anything possible, he would gladly do for me. I had a large quantity of "comforts" of various kinds packed, the Commander promising to give them out to the landing parties, and otherwise to make good use of them.

The scene alongside a few hours before they left was indescribable—boxes, bales, cots, stores of every kind coming on board. Very busy looking after his department I met the surgeon in charge, and, sitting on a baulk of timber, we had a little talk. I had brought him books, games, sparklets, &c., for which he was very grateful. The *Jelunga* was to be a hospital ship, and probably return with the wounded.

It was no easy matter to get on board, the gangways were so crowded; but at last it was accomplished. Six of my workers were among the seamen, and their kindliness and pleasure in seeing us was very great; we were besieged for books, our parcels were opened, and the contents soon gone.

I was very pleased to find that there was a great demand among the men for Testaments. "Please give me a Testament, Miss Weston," a young fellow said shyly. "Will you read it?" I replied. "Yes," he said, "I will keep it in my ditty-box, and I will always read it;" so said many others. I said to them, "I have some Testaments, and I have some other books; I only want to give Testaments to those

who will value them." Hands were outstretched all round. "Give me one, and me one, please;" and when I had finally bidden them adieu, just before she sailed, I had the pleasure of knowing that a large number of New Testaments had gone to China with the defenders of their country.

"S.S. *Jelunga*, PORT SAID, 11*th July* 1900.

"DEAR MISS WESTON,—Thank you most heartily for your kind letter, and for your still greater kindness and forethought in providing such suitable articles for the Naval Brigade. I feel sure that one and all of us will fully appreciate them, and trust that their donor may long continue to be so good and thoughtful a mother to the sailors and marines in the Royal Navy.—I have the honour to be, yours very sincerely,

"JOHN B. EUSTACE, *Commander R.N.*"

During the China War a telegram came to me from the Admiral, Sir Edward Seymour, to the effect that £400 had been collected in the China Squadron for the wounded and the widows and orphans of the men who had taken part in the dash on Pekin, that they unanimously wished it sent to me, because they knew that I should spend it at once on those that needed it. I felt that the confidence of the men was worth untold gold, and every penny of that large sum was spent as they would have wished.

Whan I went on board H.M.S. *Centurion* on her return from China, and met my friends, they told me of one and another that had fallen in the dash on Pekin, and notably of one man, whose knee and

one shoulder was shot away, besides another and more fatal wound. "He fell on his knee," they said, "and lifted one hand and his eyes to Heaven, and was praying, when he passed away."

And so the years sped on, the work increased and deepened, fresh needs had to be met, and fresh duties undertaken; there was no cessation of work either for ourselves, for the ladies with us, or for our staff of men workers.

An incident comes to my mind as I write connected with H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. It occurred some years before the Boer or China Wars, I think in 1889, but before I get too far on in my story I must chronicle it.

His Royal Highness was then Prince George of Wales, and he commanded the torpedo-boat No. 79. I wrote to him, sending him a copy of a book that I had written, called "*Shaking out a Reef*," and telling him a little about the work. I received the following reply, written by his instructions:—

"*His Royal Highness Prince George of Wales has asked me to reply to the letter that you were good enough to send him yesterday. His Royal Highness begs me to say that the letter having arrived just before he had to proceed to Spithead in his torpedo-boat, he was unable either to pay a visit to the Sailors' Rest, or to write himself and tell you so. He bids me say that he is not forgetful of the good work that you have done, and are doing, for the well-being of our seamen and marines, and that he appreciates it very highly; and he also bids me say that you may regard him as a warm sympathiser with the self-denying efforts that you are making to promote the moral and material interests of the service.*"

His Royal Highness is a thorough sailor, and is devoted to the navy; he is, as I write, giving his two eldest sons a naval training. His kind interest in the work that I represent has never relaxed; he remembers the sailors' wives, as well as the men, and gives them orders every year for needlework, which is a great help to their small means. The older men often speak of him with love and admiration. "Prince George, he's an old shipmate of mine," a man said a while ago; "we've sailed together; he's every inch a sailor, and blue water to the backbone. God bless him."

Photo *W. & D. Downey.*

HER LATE MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

CHAPTER XVIII

"OUR BELOVED QUEEN"

"I'M getting very lonely, almost all the friends of my younger days have passed away; but, thank God, I have one great comfort and stay on earth—the love of my people."

These words were spoken by our late and good Queen Victoria a few months before her death. She may well bear the proud title of the "Mother of her People," for she inspired a love and reverence that was unparalleled, and the older she grew, the deeper it became. Every one throughout the country felt the awful blank as the solemn muffled knells rang in the dark early days of 1901—every one could say with perfect truth, not only "The Queen," but "My Queen."

None of us except those far on in life had known this country without Queen Victoria. The Victorian era was a marvellous era of sixty-four years, and it is not likely to be repeated. I know for a certainty that her navy was dear to her, that navy that in 1837 consisted of wooden ships propelled by sails, now revolutionised by steel-built vessels propelled by steam; and when the new element, the air, is annexed, who is to say what the next navy will be?

At present we have "Dreadnoughts," battleships, cruisers of all kinds, torpedo craft, submarines, &c. Guns are of every description, and electricity, as well as steam, is pressed into the defence of the country. "My sailors," were the words that Queen Victoria used to myself. "Please tell me," said Her Majesty, "all that you think will interest me in your good work among My sailors." That personal pronoun went to my heart, and I wished that the whole navy had been standing by to hear it.

On one occasion, when visiting a hospital containing wounded sailors and soldiers, Her Majesty paused before one bed containing a poor fellow who was fast passing away. She sympathetically asked "Whether she could do anything for him?" "No, your Majesty," was the reply, "I am past everything; but would you thank my nurse, who has been so kind to me?"

Turning to the nurse, in a clear and distinct voice the Queen said, "I thank you very much for your kindness to my SON." Such words deserve to be written in letters of gold, for they are words of Christian sympathy.

As to my own work, the personal interest shown by Admiral H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, the Prince of Wales (our present King), the Empress Frederick of Germany, and other members of the Royal Family, no doubt did much to call forth the Queen's sympathy.

In earlier days Her Majesty had presented a cabin to Devonport, and had shown her personal interest by giving the title of "Royal" to the buildings. My little booklets published every year were always sent

to her, and were read to her, and by her command kind letters of thanks were sent to me. The Dowager Countess of Erroll, still alive and well, one of the Queen's friends, used to say to me: "I shall be with the Queen shortly; do tell me some more of your anecdotes, for Her Majesty is sure to ask me about you and your sailors."

The Dean of Windsor, an old and valued friend, kindly bore me in mind; but the Empress Frederick, who took deep interest in my work and honoured me by her friendship, was the mainspring, I am very sure, of our great Queen's kindness.

At the close of 1898 I received a wire from Windsor, from the Dean, stating that "the Queen wished to see me, and to hear about my work from my own lips on the following afternoon." I felt that it was an unmerited and wholly undeserved honour; the message took me by surprise, and it was with somewhat nervous feelings that I journeyed to Windsor; but I knew that I had not sought the honour, and I trusted that I might do the right thing.

I was staying at the Deanery, and my kind friend, the Hon. Mrs. Eliot, tried to initiate me into what I must do and say, or not say. The ordeal of kissing the Queen's hand seemed very terrible, and I had half-an-hour's practice, much to the amusement of the Dean and Mrs. Eliot, who criticised and advised; but I was much cheered by the assurance that this was most unlikely to take place, but that I should know it if the Queen held out her hand.

Arrived at the Castle we proceeded from room to room to a magnificent chamber, the windows of which looked out into the park; white, gold, and

crimson were the prevailing colours; banks of azaleas and other beautiful flowers were between the windows, and pictures and statuary were everywhere.

Presently a message arrived to say that the Queen was coming. The scene is photographed on my memory. The silver-haired lady with her Indian attendant, the Empress Frederick walking by her side, the ladies-in-waiting behind, her suite standing about and greeting her as she passed. I had been placed opposite the gilded chair upon which she sat.

I shall never forget the searching glance of those blue eyes, and then the sweet smile that overspread the Queen's face; she welcomed me most kindly and warmly, and then held out her hand for me to kiss. I did my best in the little ceremony, and then the Queen asked me to tell her any details of the work that I liked, and to speak without reserve; and the Empress Frederick smiled encouragingly. Cheered and heartened, I found no difficulty. The Queen in her silvery voice welcomed me to Windsor. She "would have arranged that I should come to Osborne as more convenient, but hoped that my reception at Windsor would be better for my work."

Her Majesty asked most kindly for Miss Wintz, and remarked that it was a pleasure to see two friends heart and soul in the work for so many years. I told her of the Duke of Edinburgh's remark—that for two women to be in a boat for so many years and not to capsize her, was a wonder indeed. At this the Queen laughed very heartily. The details as to the Sailors' Rest seemed to be of great interest—how the men came to the homes, the

difficulties we had with some of them, and the good that many seemed to get. Then I reminded her of her cabin, and asked whether I might tell her a story about it that I thought would interest her.

On receiving a smiling assent, I told her how I was passing down the dormitory in which the Queen's cabin stood, when I came across two bluejackets—one a fine fellow of the true blue type, the other a small thin man, with a sharp face, of the type called in the navy "a sea lawyer."

The big man accosted me as I drew near. "We're having a bit of controversy, Miss Weston. Is this the Queen's cabin; did Her Majesty really give it?" "Yes," I replied, "the Queen thought of this cabin, and gave it, and was interested in fitting it up. Don't you see the brass on the door, 'Given by Queen Victoria, 1895'?" "Yes," he said, "I see it, but I can scarcely believe it."

Here the other man interposed, and I paused to ask the Queen whether I should tell her what he said. She smiled and bowed.

Said he, rather sarcastically and sourly, "Did the Queen give this herself, or did it come from the national funds?" Rather nettled, I said, "The Queen gave this cabin herself out of her own privy purse." "Shut up," said the big bluejacket, "you say a word against the Queen, and I'll knock you down! Don't take any notice of him, Miss Weston; let me have my say. I've sailed all over the world, and I never came across such a thing before; the Queen's my Queen, and I'd die for her any day; but now," pointing to the cabin, "she's my *Friend*."

The Queen looked at me, and the tears chased

each other down her cheeks as she said, "Thank you so much for telling me this. I shall never forget it."

The interview lasted for forty minutes. The great Queen-Empress has passed to another world, but her parting words ring in my ears, "God bless you and Miss Wintz, and ever prosper you in your great and good work. I do not forget to pray for you."

Before the close of the audience I was permitted to kiss her hand again. I left Windsor behind me, feeling that my greatest wish had been accomplished —to look into the face and to hear the voice of Victoria the Good.

We will all treasure one of her sayings, which should be written in letters of gold, "Let me never hear the word trouble ; only tell me how the thing is to be done rightly, and I will do it if I can." Shortly afterwards a special messenger arrived at Portsmouth, bringing a Royal portrait and autograph, with the message from the Queen that it was in remembrance of my visit to Windsor.

Less than three short years passed, and the "Mother of her People" was called to her reward. Great as a Queen and Empress, she was an earnest and devoted Christian, she loved her Lord, and death to her was the bright entrance to a full and glorious life. None of us can ever forget the passing of that great soul. "She went out with the tide," said the bluejackets mysteriously.

During the interview at Windsor, Her Majesty had said that she "would like to welcome me at Osborne." By the kindness of Queen Alexandra I went to Osborne, there to stand by a small coffin, upon which glittered the Jubilee crown, while

around were grouped palms, banners, and flowers. That voice seemed to sound in my ears again ; my visit to Osborne was paid ; but, better still, the words seemed to float in the air, "*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*"

The funeral in all its stages is still fresh in our memories. The stately ships guarding the way across the Solent; the minute-guns booming out; the little *Alberta*, carrying the coffin, steaming at the head of the procession of yachts ; the pathway of gold, as the bright sunshine, down which they came, stretched across the water from Osborne to Portsmouth. All was so pathetic, and most of all, perhaps, the tense silence and the tears of the thousands of onlookers.

One event at Windsor is remembered in the navy to this day, and that was the jibbing of the horses attached to the carriage on which the coffin was placed. It was Jack's opportunity, and, permission given by the King, the men whipped out the restive horses, attached the drag-ropes, and drew her themselves to St. George's. "It's what she would have wished," said one of them, "and I says, God bless them horses for giving us the chance."

> "Borne to her bier by her sailors,
> It was only fitting and meet
> That the dead Great Queen of the ocean,
> Should be borne by the men of her fleet."

After my visit to Windsor, in 1898, the time drew on for the opening of the Diamond Jubilee block of cabins at Portsmouth. It had cost many thousands of pounds, and we felt that it was only due to its

name, and to the fact that all the money had been given in memory of the Diamond Jubilee, that one of the Royal Family should, if possible, open it. The enthusiasm of the bluejackets at both Jubilees had been great, in some instances not quite wise, as at Devonport, where a number of men, each seizing a fire-bucket, rushed upstairs to the parapet of the house to "bonnet" the police, by throwing these buckets on their heads; but they were fortunately stopped in time.

Another man excused himself for being somewhat the worse for drink, "because he had been drinking Her Majesty's health," he remarked; "that he remembered the first jubilee, and now this was Diamond Jubilee; he only hoped he might drink her health in many more jubilees, he didn't care what precious stones they might be named after."

We had celebrated Her Majesty's Jubilee by erecting this splendid addition of cabins and other accommodation for the Royal Sailors' Rest, Portsmouth. And very soon after my visit to Windsor the building was ready for opening, and I felt sure that, if possible, the Empress Frederick would kindly open it.

The request was no sooner made than it was granted. And on a bitterly cold December day, 1898, nothing daunted, the Empress and her suite came over from Osborne in one of the Royal yachts. We had invited a number of friends and well-wishers of the work to meet Her Majesty, and a guard of honour awaited her and gave her the salute. The Empress was always most popular in Portsmouth, and won all hearts by her kindness.

Thousands of people crowded around to see and to cheer her.

She was received at the door of our hall by myself and Miss Wintz, and conducted to the platform, the band playing the English and German National Anthems. Yielding to my request, the Empress took the chair, and smilingly looked over the hall. It was a pretty sight; the winter sun shone brightly; the well-dressed audience, with a representation, by no means small, of bluejackets and marines, sailors' wives and children, all come by special invitation.

The Rev. Gordon Lang, then vicar at Portsea, now Archbishop of York, offered prayer; and then the Empress, rising, in the same sweet, clear voice that characterised the Queen, spoke of her interest in the work, her personal knowledge of it for many years past, and the pleasure that it gave her to open such a noble addition as the "Diamond Jubilee Block," and closed her kind words by asking me to tell them all details that she herself would delight to hear.

I was able to do this, with various incidents from real life which had occurred to us, as we lived and worked among the bluejackets and their belongings. At the close I presented the Empress with a silver key with which to open the doors of the new building.

This was the next little ceremony, and, after it was duly done, the Empress expressed a wish to go over the whole pile of buildings. It was a long inspection, and I remember there was a little controversy as to whether she could spend so much time with us, on

account of the tide at Cowes, which would prevent the yacht going alongside, and would necessitate landing in a launch ; the Empress cut the controversy short, in her kindly but determined way: "I am going to stay here," she said, "go over the building and take tea with Miss Weston, and I am quite willing to land in the launch."

This settled the matter, and we proceeded. As we drew near the dormitory in which the cabin, given by herself when Crown Princess, was placed, she said to me, "I should like them all to wait below, and you will come with me to my cabin." I did so. When the door was opened, and she saw the likeness of the Emperor Frederick and her own portrait, both given by herself, she broke down, and speaking unreservedly, she told me about the sorrows through which she had passed, and much that is too sacred to pass on ; but she said, as she restrained her tears, "I can thank God now, for I know that all was sent in love."

To cheer her, I directed her attention to the next cabin, given by Prince Henry of Prussia, and told her that he had said, "Please place my cabin next to my mother's." It was a ray of sunshine on a dark day of sorrow.

How little we thought that in a very few years—1901, the year in which our beloved Queen died—that her eldest daughter would be called home, and yet it was so. Victoria Adelaide Mary Louisa, Princess Royal of Great Britain and Ireland, inherited her father's intellect and artistic tastes, along with her mother's virtues and kindness of disposition. Of the joys and sorrows of her life I will not speak,

they are matters of history. The cup of power was placed to her lips to be dashed away ; and although the latter part of her life was brightened by the love of her family, it was overshadowed by terrible suffering, and she followed her mother quickly into that world where God's dealings will be understood, and will be found to be all love.

As I write I seem to be standing by her open grave, and I can bear my humble tribute to one who, though a Princess and an Empress, gave to myself and Miss Wintz the inestimable gift of her friendship ; and in the passing of that great and good Empress we feel that we have lost a true friend, but only until "*the day dawn and the shadows flee away.*"

The previous year, 1900, the standard was half-mast high, and the last sorrow that our beloved Queen had to bear came to her in the death of her second son, Prince Alfred, the Sailor Prince, Duke of Edinburgh and reigning Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.

He was also a true friend to my work, which he had known well during his long naval service ; and when he was appointed to the chief command and hoisted his flag at Devonport, I felt that I had an admiral to whom I could go in any difficulty, who would open the way for me, and with whom I could talk over our sailors' troubles as to a true sympathiser. I have told how, in 1891, when H.M.S. *Serpent* was lost, he cared for the widow and the fatherless, and I remember well how he went into every case, and inquired into every detail as to the wives and families, and more than once he said to me, "You will look after them, Miss

Weston, don't let any of them suffer ; if they want immediate help come to me."

His visits to the Sailors' Rests were not few or far between, he would go over the whole building from top to bottom, and would make suggestions as to alterations and improvements ; and he would stand quietly at the bottom of the hall listening to the singing of the sailor boys.

On one of those occasions His Royal Highness said to me, "I am going to Windsor. The Queen is interested in your work. Is there anything I can ask Her Majesty to do for you?" "There is one thing, sir," I replied, "I should like the Queen to confer the title of 'Royal' on these Sailors' Rests ; it would be a guinea stamp for them." "You are right," said the Duke, "I will try to get the royal consent for you." He did so, and, as I have already mentioned, the title was most generously conferred, and the framed patent, from the Secretary of State, hangs in the Royal Sailors' Rest, Devonport. On the accession of our King he most kindly confirmed it himself.

Her Royal and Imperial Highness, the Duchess of Edinburgh, was most sympathetic and kind. I received an intimation one morning that she would like to come to the Royal Sailors' Rest that day, as the sailor boys were on shore. She came, and, after a little kindly talk, expressed her wish to go among the boys without being known. She moved about among them, and talked to them about their homes and their mothers, and many a boy told the kind lady his life history. The Duchess then went out into the restaurant.

"May I help?" she asked, and then her eye lighted on the glittering urns on the counter. "I can pour out coffee, at any rate." By this time boys from the outside had brought the news that, as the Royal Standard was flying over the building, Royalty must be inside; and they crowded in to get a cup of coffee from the hands of a Royal Duchess. Truth compels me to say that the bigger boys trod ruthlessly on the toes of the smaller ones and drove them back, but the pleasure given was very great.

On another occasion, when the Duke took the chair at the Annual Meeting in our Hall, the Duchess accompanied him, taking the greatest interest in all the details of the year's work.

Among many other kind actions he induced our present King, then Prince of Wales, to pay a visit to the Royal Sailors' Rest, Devonport. He came, and in my absence was received by Miss Wintz, who showed him everything. He expressed his great interest and appreciation, and, both as Prince of Wales and King, has been a true friend of this work. We were all sorry when H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh left, but he did not forget ourselves or our work.

About a year before his death he sent me the Silver Wedding Decoration, a beautiful medal, with his own likeness and that of the Duchess upon it, suspended by a ribbon of Saxe-Coburg colours. I am proud to wear it, and since his death it has had a deeper significance.

The Duke passed away suddenly; although he had suffered for some time, genuine sorrow was felt in the navy, for he was much liked and respected.

In response to a letter to Her Majesty, I received a reply in which were the following words, "*The Queen greatly appreciates the sympathy that you feel for her in her deep sorrow. Her Majesty's health, I am glad to say, continues good.*"

The inscription over the Royal Mausoleum at Windsor may fitly close this chapter, as referring not only to the husband of her youth, the great and good Prince Consort, but also to the children who preceded and followed her: "FAREWELL, BELOVED. HERE AT LAST I WILL REST WITH THEE, AND WITH THEE IN CHRIST I WILL RISE AGAIN."

CHAPTER XIX

AMONG THE PINES

On the borders of Surrey, about 40 miles from Hyde Park corner, is a lovely tract of country called Hindhead, rising to some 800 feet above the sea. It looks like a bit of the Highlands let down promiscuously near London. The pines, the birch and the mountain ash, the heather and the fern, the wild bits of moorland and also, in quiet corners, the lovely sylvan scenery make the place unique.

The old coaching road from London to Portsmouth runs over Hindhead, and Nelson must have been familiar with its landmarks. If history speaks truly it was not only a wild, but rather a dangerous part of the country; in the olden times an extra horse and an extra guard used to be shipped at Godalming to convoy the coach safely up and down the wild hills, where attacks by footpads were very probable. But all this has passed away, the place has become residential, and motors hum daily along the road. The air is magnificent, a rest and restoration indeed to tired Londoners and to fagged workers of every description.

All these attractions drew us to the spot; it was about an hour by rail from Portsmouth, and we felt that we might be able to accomplish a home and

do our work as well. A little châlet among the pines and heather, with some picturesque woodland attached, seemed just the spot, sheltered from the winds, and near church and post office.

In 1901 we made our move from Waterloo to Grayshott; we were a very bright party—Miss Wintz, myself, Miss Brown—for many years our fellow-worker and co-trustee—and my nephew, who was then reading for Cambridge. The summer was a beautiful one; while alterations and additions were being made to the house we camped out and about, and enjoyed the freedom of the moors, and continued our work at Portsmouth *con amore*.

This summer will always carry its red-letter day in my memory by the honour that the University of Glasgow was pleased to bestow upon me, by conferring the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws; I had heard some little time before that many members of the University desired this, but the Senate had ultimately to decide the question.

One day the post brought the Latin proclamation of the degree that the University desired to give me, and the summons to Glasgow for the graduation ceremony. Never before had that old University, 450 years old, admitted women to its honours. Mrs. Campbell of Tullichewan Castle, Loch Lomond, whose life has been devoted to the higher education of women; Miss Davies, who had founded and carried on Girton College, Cambridge; Mrs. John Elder, whose munificent donations to the University are well known, and myself, were the four selected.

With Miss Wintz I left Euston and travelled to Glasgow by the night express, driving straight to the

University to the house of our kind friends, Professor and Mrs. Cleland, and in the early morning a hearty welcome and a cheerful breakfast party awaited us.

My gown, doctor's hood, and square cap were all forthcoming. At about ten o'clock we assembled in a fine hall, crossing the quadrangle and passing through the cloisters. A very large body of celebrities, on whom the honorary degree was about to be conferred, had assembled. The Bishops of Ripon, Bath and Wells, and several Scotch divines, the Marquis of Dufferin, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Sir William M'Cormac, Sir James Reid, Sir Archibald Hunter, Sir Ian Hamilton, and savants from the Universities of Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Berne, Cracow, Prague, India, Canada, the United States, &c. It was a sight worth travelling far to see.

Two ladies out of the three, Mrs. Campbell and Miss Emily Davies, were present; Mrs. John Elder was too ill, and her degree was conferred *in absentiâ*. At a given time the procession, headed by the University authorities, was formed, and we filed into the beautiful Bute Hall to the strains of the organ. Every available corner in the hall was crowded, and the undergraduates were stowed into the galleries. When all were seated, Lord Kelvin opened with an oration, followed by the Dean of Law, and then the ceremony commenced.

First came the Doctors of Divinity, who each took the oath, enrolled their names, and were invested with the hood of their order. Then there was a pause; the Dean of Law, in his scarlet robes, advancing, addressed the great audience, telling them of the determination of the University to admit women to

their highest honours, and he ended by calling us forward first.

The enthusiasm was tremendous; the whole audience uprose, the organ pealed, the undergraduates cheered wildly, and we were led forward by two graduates with white wands. It was simple and striking; in academical gowns, and with college caps in our hands, we mounted the daïs, handing our doctor's hoods to a University functionary. We each knelt in turn before the Vice-Chancellor, who performed the ceremony of admitting us to our rank with great picturesqueness and dignity. Each of us took the oath to be faithful to the University; then the cheering began anew, a wag among the undergraduates striking up, accompanied by the organ, "*For she's a jolly good fellow!*"

After a time all was over, and the procession, wearing hoods and caps, re-formed. The undergraduates massed themselves at the great doors, and truth compels me to state that they let all the Doctors of Divinity pass, but as we appeared a voice called out, "Three cheers for the lady doctors." The caps were thrown into the air, and the cheering shook the place.

After this we attended several delightful functions, and returned to our home among the pines, tired, but with a very warm feeling towards our *Alma Mater;* and I cannot but hope that such a step forward, on the part of an ancient University, may be an encouragement to workers who have done quite as good work, or better, than I have done.

Just about this time my nephew passed for King's College, Cambridge, and in the autumn went into

residence, making a break in our family circle, although he always looked upon the little place as his home.

An interesting episode occurred in the return of H.M.S. *Terrible*, which stirred the patriotic feeling of the country, and a warm welcome was extended to the captain, officers, and men. It was a great pleasure to me to go on board the great cruiser, and to welcome so many friends home again. It was Captain Percy Scott and his clever mechanics who devised the carriage for the 4.7 gun, with its long range, and speedily got it up to Ladysmith, where it saved the town. After doing good service in South Africa the *Terrible* was ordered to China, where the ship's company took part in all that occurred there, returning to England after the double war.

About this time I received a short note from a young officer, which I treasure much, enclosing a cheque for my work. He had just received a decoration for valour; and he wrote: "Dear Miss Weston,—Knowing the excellent work that you do for our men, I thought that I would celebrate my honour by sending you a small donation, as I consider that I obtained it by the splendid way in which my company backed me up.—Yours truly, E. C. H.M.S. ——."

Two very sad events in connection with our navy stand clear in my remembrance, and were not in order of time far from each other—the loss of H.M.S. *Condor* and H.M.S. *Cobra*. The *Condor* has been a ship that never returned; she left Esquimalt, if I remember right, in December 1900, for Hono-

lulu and the Pacific Islands; since then she has vanished into obscurity, and all the searching that has been actively carried out has only resulted in the finding of some small pieces of wreckage with the name *Condor* upon them, and the rim of a sailor's cap. The 120 souls have disappeared from mortal ken, and will not be seen again in this world.

Meanwhile there were the stricken ones to care for; I have helped them with the money entrusted to me to this date, and it has now nearly run out. Poor dear people, they hoped against hope for years, and many believed that the ship had been cast away on some coral islands, and that husbands and sons would return once more. As we visit, help, and write to these sorrowful ones we are always able to try to lift their hearts to Him who sorrows with them, and who will bless and guide them if they trust in Him.

The loss of H.M.S. *Cobra* was quite different. She foundered in the North Sea, leaving seven out of sixty-seven to tell the tale. The news was wired to Portsmouth, and was stunning; the men had only left the town by rail a few hours previously to proceed to the Tyne to take over from the contractor's hands the new torpedo destroyer *Cobra*, but they never returned again.

One Monday in October 1901, a stormy night and very dark, the ship left the Tyne; she battled with the waves all night, and early on the Tuesday morning she was seen suddenly to collapse and to break in two; the stem and stern shot up into the air, and in a few minutes the ship foundered. The men behaved like British bluejackets; each was at

his post, without flurry or alarm the boats were cut free, but, alas, none could live in such a sea except the dinghy, and she was crowded.

The Captain, a young Lieutenant-Commander, like the brave officer and gentleman that he was, stuck to his post, and went down with her. Men were swept about in the wild waves, and the death-cry went up as one after the other was sucked down.

As the dinghy, nearly swamped, drifted along, a seaman, after an exhausting swim, reached her, and twice placed his hand upon the gunwale. His nautical eye took in the heavy boat-load; he saw that if he added his weight all would be lost, so he said, "It's one for many, good-bye all," and he loosed his grip, sinking to rise no more.

Our duty at Portsmouth was plain, and it was as ever, to render first aid. We were able to hand to each widow and mother the full pay that the husband or son would have drawn two days after the loss of the ship. Our *Cobra* fund was used for their benefit as long as it lasted, and the bereaved relatives were saved from sinking into debt and penury, perhaps losing the little homes that the poor drowned husbands had toiled so hard to get together for them.

Meanwhile a splendid block of buildings was rising at Devonport to the memory of our late Queen, now called "*The Victoria Memorial Block.*" It stood on the site of the old Sailors' Rest and another house joining the main building, and making a very handsome pile. We were intending to remove Queen Victoria's cabin to this block; hearing of this a kind letter was written to me by command

of the King, stating that His Majesty would wish to give a cabin to the Victoria Memorial Block, and almost simultaneously with the King's letter came one from Queen Alexandra, saying that her wish was to follow the King's example, and to do the same. Visitors to the Sailors' Rest at Devonport are always interested in seeing the three Royal cabins—our late dear Queen's in the centre—in the new dormitory.

Naturally, in the raising of many thousand pounds, I had to travel long distances, and to speak at many meetings, at no little personal toil, as all those who have to do that kind of work well know, but I was richly rewarded by the crowded audiences, deep interest, and willing help that was given. I came back to my work rather fagged, and feeling as if I wanted a little rest, but a few days in my little home among the pines soon renewed my powers.

Criticism, I suppose, must follow us everywhere, and as long as it is legitimate we are glad of, and can profit by it; unkind, and I may say unjust, criticism is hard to bear; still it is a part of every one's life-work, and really does no harm.

As the late Mr. Spurgeon said, "In every good work you must have a kind heart and a tough hide to stand the abuse, unkind words, and false insinuations that are often levelled against you." He is right; we have had plenty of it in our time; there are bitter, as well as sweet memories, and fellow-workers who read this book may think that we have had all the sunshine and they have had all the storms, but this is not so. "*Trust in God and do the right*" is a good motto, and, with the love of

Christ in our hearts, these trials will not affect or harm us any more than boiled peas would affect the Rock of Gibraltar if fired against it.

In the year 1901 I was asked to speak at the Church Congress at Brighton. The late Bishop of Chichester was in the chair. I was able to give an account of the work, which appeared greatly to interest the audience, and I asked the clergy present to send me the names and addresses of boys in their parishes when they joined the King's training service, that we might send on board to greet them, and to invite them to the Sailors' Rest when they come ashore. Several clergymen have since done so, and we have had the pleasure of greeting the boys personally.

Among many pleasant things which have followed my degree, this letter from some of my fellow-subjects in the great Indian Empire will, I am sure, interest my readers. I give it just as received :—

"KULASAGARA ALVAR SABAH, PUDUPET, MADRAS,
" *28th July* 1901.

"MADAM,—In forwarding herewith a true copy of the resolution which was unanimously carried at our committee meeting amidst acclamations, I beg of you to accept the hearty congratulations on the rare distinction attained. By your ardent love and sincere sympathy for the sailors of your motherland you have been a pioneer for their social emancipation. Consequently, the civilised world views this mark of honour as a just appreciation of your labours for the noble cause.

"This is the wish of all the members of my 'Sabah,' that you may be spared to live for many

more years to conduct the crusade which you undertook at your own free will and pleasure.

"In this connection I am extremely glad to say that the pamphlets which you were kind enough to present to our Free Library are read with intense interest by the members, and I am also getting *Ashore and Afloat* regularly.

"Wishing you success in all your undertakings, I am, madam, yours very obediently,

"E. ETHIRAJA NAICKER, *Secretary.*"

"(*Resolution No.* 4, *of* 20*th July* 1901.)

"Proposed by Mr. K. Balasundrum, M.A., and seconded by Mr. T. Krishnaswawny, B.A.

"'That a congratulatory letter be sent to Miss Agnes Weston (one of our patrons for the Free Library) for the merited recognition of the Glasgow University in having conferred upon her the honorary degree of LL.D.' "E. ETHIRAJA NAICKER.

"25*th July* 1901."

Needless to say, I look upon this letter as a striking token of appreciation and honour, and it bulks large among my happy reminiscences of the early days of the twentieth century.

During the latter part of 1901 I remember paying visits to two American warships, and I thank the officers now, as I did then, for the kindness with which they received me. The two ships were U.S.S. *Alliance* and *Hartford.* The *Alliance* was lying in Plymouth Sound, and the Captain

kindly sent the launch to bring me off. Arriving on board, I had a nice talk with the Captain and officers, and then went "forward," as we call it, among the men. They received me most warmly, crowded around, and listened very attentively when I spoke to them. I hope that some good was done; at any rate we looked into each other's faces, and became friends. When I left they gave me three ringing cheers.

To go on board the U.S.S. *Hartford* I had to travel to London, and thence to Gravesend. It was blowing very fresh, and the launch rolled about well in the river. The American ship *Hartford* is historic, inasmuch as she was Admiral Farragut's flagship, and has gone through service. On board this ship I had such a welcome as Americans can only give; the band struck up, and the Captain and officers seemed to vie with each other in cordiality. I went all over the ship, and here, as in every American warship, our *Ashore and Afloat* and my *Monthly Letters* were eagerly looked for, and read from end to end.

I asked to be allowed to speak to the men, and the meeting was called on the main deck; at the close the band struck up our National Anthem. After a cup of tea, and some chat with the officers in the ward-room, I started in the launch homeward bound, followed by the cheers of the men.

I must not forget now to chronicle a very charming visit paid to us at the Royal Sailors' Rest, Portsmouth, in June 1902, by H.R.H. the Princess Henry of Battenberg, our own Princess Beatrice. She will ever be loved by the nation for her devotion to the great Queen who has passed away from us;

And I felt it to be a very great honour and pleasure to receive her at the Royal Sailors' Rest.

The Princess crossed over from Osborne in the *Fire Queen*, and, attended by Miss Minnie Cochrane and the Hon. Colonel Colborne, arrived punctually to the moment at the Sailors' Rest. The building was dressed with flags, and the White Ensign flew from the main. A group of sailors awaited Her Royal Highness—men whom she had known in years past on board the royal yacht. When she had shaken hands with me, and had come into my sitting-room, she asked me about them. I told her that they had known her when very young, and that they were now my workers, but were anxious to welcome her in the old uniform. She expressed her great pleasure, and spoke kindly to each.

The tour that Princess Henry made round the building was a long one. She inspected the dormitories, and was particularly touched by the cabin given by the late Empress Frederick. We then descended to the baths, the bicycle store, the storerooms, mineral water manufactory, sausage making, the kitchens, with the cooks at work, and the bakery alive with bakers—tarts, buns, bread going in and out of the great ovens.

Emerging into the restaurant, there were bluejackets pegging away; in the reading-rooms they were busy with the papers or enjoying a quiet snooze. Before leaving the building the Princess spoke to several sailors' wives, and made some purchase of needlework done by them. Her Royal Highness expressed to me her very great pleasure at all that she had seen; that "she had expected

very much, but that the Sailors' Rest had far exceeded all her expectations," and with other kindly words she drove away.

It was in the sunny month of June 1902 that H.R.H. Princess Henry of Battenberg visited me, bringing brightness and happiness; but in November of the same year an event occurred which was a real sorrow; this was the loss of H.M. Revenue Cutter *Active*. The November gales of that year took a fearful toll of human life all around our coasts. The cutter *Active* was lost on Granton breakwater, dragging her anchors. The ship's company were mostly young men, and oh! the agonising letters that I received from their mothers.

The Captain of the *Active* was Lieutenant Charles Culley, R.N., and he went down with his ship. I think of Lieutenant Culley, and I remember him many years ago as a sailor boy on board the *Impregnable* at Devonport. He used to make the Sailors' Rest his home, and there he signed the temperance pledge that he kept all his life; and there he learned to love and trust that Saviour who was near to him in the hour of death, and who received him to glory.

"He was a good husband, a good father, and a real Christian," wrote his broken-hearted widow, "and we have to thank you for it." We thank God to whom alone the glory is due, but we rejoice to have had a hand in the fashioning of such a character as that of Charles Culley. He rose as high as it was possible for a bluejacket in the navy to rise, wearing the stripes of a Lieutenant and commanding his own ship. His influence over his

men was always for good, and their testimony is that a wrong word never came from his lips. He truly lived for Christ ; he was called away suddenly, but he died at the post of duty.

I was very glad to be able to revisit the University of Cambridge about this time. My nephew, John Cecil Weston, or, as we love to call him, Jack, was the lodestone that drew me there ; and it was a pleasure indeed to be with him in his college rooms, and to visit once again the chapels and colleges that I had known years before. As my nephew was at King's, he was, like all King's men, proud of his chapel. The lovely stained-glass windows, and the exquisite singing of the choir are never to be forgotten.

I had some very interesting meetings on behalf of my work during my stay in the old University town —one at Peterhouse, presided over by Dr. Butler, Master of Trinity ; another at Emmanuel College, in the rooms of Mr. Alfred Crowfoot, a cousin of mine. It was crowded with undergraduates, the Dean presiding. These meetings, with the young life that filled the rooms, have been always most inspiriting to me, and I hope may be a help in their future lives to the listeners.

My last visit to Cambridge was to see my nephew take his degree, which he did with honours. The old Senate House was crowded, and the celebrated "wooden spoon," of gigantic proportions, gaily decorated with ribbon, hung in the centre of the house ; the undergraduates were full of life and fun as ever. The last evening spent in the grounds of King's College will not be forgotten, the summer

moon shining down and the limes scenting the air. Those that had taken their degree seemed sorry indeed that the time had come to sever their connection with the dear old place, and to leave a part of their lives behind that would never return, but would always be a bright memory.

CHAPTER XX

"THE SAILOR'S WIFE, THE SAILOR'S STAR SHOULD BE"

THE sailor's wife has been, next to himself, and, I may say, with himself, very dear to me during my long years of naval work. I have many reminiscences of them—bright, cheering, and amusing. Jack can have no better helper than a true and faithful wife.

"I can never get so far from her but that I can feel her pulling at me," a man said to me, who had been far enough off indeed, serving on the Australian station. I am afraid that the bluejacket is sometimes a little precipitate in entering into matrimony before he has risen to a rank high enough to enable him to keep his wife on his pay. The navy and the army differ *in toto* on the marriage question; Jack is at liberty to marry when and how he likes, and his fascinations are so strong that he seems well-nigh irresistible.

A young bluejacket brought his wife up to introduce her to me before he went on foreign service. "I would like you to know her, Miss Weston, and to look after her while I am away; she is only seventeen—quite a girl." The speaker looked quite a boy, and when I ventured to ask his age, he said proudly, "I'm nineteen, and I'm getting on in the

service." I was very glad to know the young bride, to make her welcome to the Sailors' Rest, and to try to provide her with good friends.

The navy has altered immensely, and the men stand on a higher platform than that of the blue-jacket of the olden time. Therefore it is not surprising to find that the marriages that took place in old days are practically non-existent now. The public must purge its mind of Marryat's novels before it can grasp the navy of the present day.

We have over a thousand sailors' and marines' wives connected with our Sailors' Rests, and I would proudly place them in competition with the wives of any class of men in various trades, feeling sure that they would come out at the top. In this respect the old days have passed for ever, and the song is fulfilled, "*The sailor's wife, the sailor's star should be.*" "I'm lying at safe moorings," a man in our hall said to me, pointing to a comely woman at the side; "this is my wife; long years since I've seen her, but I'm safe in the old moorings again."

From the commencement of my work I always felt that nothing we could do for Jack was complete unless we included the "Missus," and, if possible, the children. On one occasion, some years ago, when I was working a savings bank for the men, a blue-jacket came to see me about his savings.

"I want to draw it out, Miss Weston, and take it to the Missus; she'll be so pleased." I thought of possible dangers in transit, and I evaded the question by asking him "whether he had ever taken home a sum of money successfully?" He looked rather uncomfortable and said, "Well, no, I never did; I

used to draw the money, twenty or thirty pounds, out of the ship's savings bank, but I never got it home. I wish that my wife was here; she's the 'Captain of my ship,' and she always takes the money bags."

I arranged satisfactorily with this man that the money should be forwarded to him after he had arrived at home, and the "Captain of the ship" was in supreme command! When he returned I asked him how all had gone, and he told me what a help the cash had been, how the wife said "that she had never had such a pay-day before." And after they had paid some money that she owed and had apprenticed a son, he said, "I had my way for a bit. I wanted to buy my wife a nice dress and 'top hamper' like the Admiral's wife, and I did, and she looked nice, I can tell you. After this there was more money, and I put it into the savings bank."

"In your own name?" I asked, perhaps unwisely. "Oh, no," he said, "in the name of the Captain of the ship—a nice little sum for her to veer and haul on while I am away." Here was such a wife as we would wish all our friends to have—a companion and adviser, a good wife, and a good mother.

The number of sailors' wives that have passed through our meetings during the time that we have had them, would number millions if totalled up. We value the friendship of our sailors' wives very exceedingly, and the sight on any Monday at Devonport or Portsmouth of our large hall filled with the wives, once seen, is not to be forgotten. They represent men serving all over the world, as can be seen when the

names of foreign stations are announced, and those connected with them put up their hands.

We have our clubs of various kinds, our library, our stalls for materials, ready-made clothing, &c., and, above all, our crêche for the little ones. Babies in arms can be brought into the hall, and sometimes one hundred babies are present, blowing their little steam whistles pretty loudly; but those at all older go to the nursery; they are in charge of trustworthy women, and have plenty of toys, mattresses to tumble about on, cradles to lie in, milk and water, &c.—100 or 150 children sometimes crowd the nursery.

We make our Monday afternoons as bright and cheerful as possible—plenty of singing, always a short Bible-reading, and then something fresh every week. They do enjoy these meetings. A wife said to me, "We bring plenty of troubles here, but we don't carry them away." Of course such large gatherings have to be so controlled that talking should be at a minimum. They give in their names on a slip of paper as they enter, and this obviates the monotonous roll call. They may talk as much as they like before the meeting opens, but when once the gong is sounded there must be silence.

A great boon to the sailors' wives consists in our system of nursing help. We have a sick committee of sailors' wives, and they organise bazaars from time to time, and various other means of getting up money. A portion of this money, both at Portsmouth and Devonport, is voted to the "Victoria Jubilee Nurses." These admirable nurses are available at all times for maternity and district nursing. They are very skilful and kind, and by this affiliation we

have any number of trained nurses on the telephone to be summoned at a moment's notice. For maternity cases we encourage our members to join the Maternity Club, and to save up at least £1; we give a percentage on the money, and some groceries, and little comforts, and the skilled nurse is secured. This work is run by the sailors' wives themselves under our supervision.

They also vote money to send members away to a sanatorium, and in other ways to recruit them. At Devonport they have a "Holiday Home" at Saltash, to which members can go free, with their families, for a fortnight's change and country air. They go out pale and wan and come home strong and ruddy. The husband, if in the port, will cycle out, if he can get leave. We lend the furnished house to them, with coal and light, which is entirely paid for out of funds raised by our sailors' wives.

I find in my diary an account of one of these bazaars, and I think if I tear out the leaf and insert it, it may interest many whose work lies in the same direction. It is truly a "*Help One Another Society*," so I will give an account here of the bazaar got up by our sailors' wives at Devonport to place their Sick Fund and Holiday Home on a substantial basis.

It was a brilliant success; the pretty stalls, dressed with flags and named after various ships in the Royal Navy, were set off by our beautiful new hall. In the centre was a model ship named the "*Agnes Weston*," manned by a ship's company of children, who dispensed penny gifts from its hold. The bluejackets had a stall themselves, which they proudly named H.M.S. *Conqueror*, and I am bound to

say that they took a considerable sum. The refreshment stall, sweet stall, fancy stall, plain work, china, and flower stall all contributed their quota.

The bazaar was opened on the first day by the Right. Hon. the Countess of St. Germans, who spoke most kindly and warmly of our work and of the interest she felt in it. As she ceased speaking the pennant of the little ship was hoisted, the band played "God Save the King," and the bazaar was declared open. Our side shows answered very well; we had twopenny concerts, exhibitions of the cinematograph, hat-trimming and washing competitions by bluejackets and others, which created great merriment.

The evening of the second day was signalised by a jumble sale, provided by Miss Wintz, and when the hour of closing drew on the stalls were found to be empty, all the goods sold, no raffling allowed, and the substantial sum of £203 taken. As the expenses were small, the funds benefited considerably, so much so, that a larger house was immediately taken for our Holiday Home.

We also have a splendid Temperance Society for the wives, a branch of the *Royal Naval Temperance Society*, so that husbands and wives can be in one Society. The wives' branches at Portsmouth, Devonport, and Chatham number about 1200 members. When the wife joins she almost always writes to her husband to get him to join too, and *vice versâ*. A bright fellow said: "The best thing that you've done for a long time has been having a wives' branch of the R.N.T.S.; we're all sailing in the same ship now." These branches have each their own committee,

presided over by Miss Wintz, or one of our ladies, and many a home has been made safe and happy by clearing out intoxicating drink.

Then we aim higher still; we try to take in body, soul, and spirit. Many of our sailors' wives are earnest Christians, and many have become so. To meet this most important need a wives' branch of the *Royal Naval Christian Union* has been formed. This Union has long worked among the men of the navy, as I mentioned earlier in this book; but now the wives can join too.

The bond of union is to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and to have taken Him as a personal Saviour. Husbands and wives can read the same Bible-lesson, although thousands of miles apart; and as each member is expected to be a missionary, a great deal of Christian work is done. Miss Wintz and myself are the Hon. Superintendents of both these great Societies, and Vice-Admiral G. F. King Hall, C.V.O., and Rear-Admiral Robert S. Lowry are the Presidents.

We have a selected committee of earnest-minded women, many of them the wives of petty-officers, who help us splendidly in visiting the sick, absentees, &c. We have also a capital meeting at Eastney every week for the wives of the men of the Royal Marine Artillery, and they are equally earnest and devoted. I feel that the fact that we are surrounded by such a body of Christian workers, all service people, is the greatest boon that God could give us.

We were, I believe, the first to start meetings for sailors' and marines' wives, about 1874. Mrs. Goodenough, the widow of Commodore Goodenough,

many years ago talked over with me, at Hampton Court Palace, her scheme of banding together officers' wives to visit the seamen's wives, thus forming a mutual bond of union. This system seemed to me very good, if worked well, and I believe that at present it has succeeded beyond expectation. The *Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association* also does good and great service in visiting and relieving the men's wives, and also in providing nurses.

Our work always seems needed. When any naval calamity occurs societies are often handicapped by committees, whose dilatoriness brings to our minds one of Mr. Moody's terse sayings, "That if Noah had had a committee he never would have built the ark." Miss Wintz and myself are, by provision of our trust-deed, managing trustees. This committee is soon called, a cheque drawn, and funds are available at once, so that the wives' pay can be continued for a time to the dependent relatives to enable them to recover themselves before starting out to earn their own bread.

There are piteous tales of invalided men, discharged from the service as medically unfit, and their railway journey paid home; then all ceases, unless under special circumstances. The nourishing food is a sheer impossibility to the hard-working wife or poor old mother. Jack would work if he could, and he looks pitifully on his wasted arms, and longs for health. I am able, through my Naval Disaster Fund, either to send him to a sanatorium for fresh air and "kitchen physic" for a month, or to allow him 10s. a week for a month to recruit.

People have a shadowy idea that whenever a bluejacket leaves the navy that he is pensioned, and that as far as he is concerned all is right ; but the grateful country only pensions him when he has served for twenty-one years. Numbers of men are invalided out of the service every year, sometimes with an allowance of sixpence a day for a short time ; sometimes, and more frequently, with nothing. But even sixpence will not put much flesh on the bones of a wasted invalid.

At Portsmouth, a while ago, a man was invalided out of the service ; we found him in two dark rooms that he called "home," with only dry bread to eat, and weak tea to drink ; and he stinted himself even of these, because the children cried for food. "I don't see," he said apologetically, "how I can get up my strength on this. I want to work, but I can scarcely totter across the room. How I do miss the hospital food."

I did feel thankful to know that I had a Fund to meet these cases, to which a friend had just given me £200. In concert with the clergyman of the parish, I was able, by the expenditure of a £5 note, to give him the food which, he says, "has put new life into him," and he was soon ready and willing for work, and got it.

Every week there is a survey at the great Naval Hospital, and numbers of men are discharged as "medically unfit." The verdict is perfectly true, but there is a world of pathos in the life-histories of each when returned to their homes.

A young signalman was found in a garret at Portsmouth alone, and dying ; he had no friends or

relations, and the landlady attended him as well as she could. Some of the members of the *Royal Naval Christian Union* found him out, and visited him constantly, taking him food and niceties, and in turns sat up with him at night.

In this way, by their help, we were able to minister to him. He sank gradually, and at last he became so weak that he could scarcely speak, but just before his death he thanked them all and bade them good-bye, and with a bright happy smile on his face he said, "The signal's hoisted, I'm nearly safe in port."

Another young fellow just out of the service, "medically unfit," was found in a Birmingham slum very destitute. A lady visiting in the court, knowing that he had belonged to the Royal Navy, said, "Do you know Miss Weston and Miss Wintz?" His eyes glowed and he said, "Yes, indeed; and I love them. I should not be a bluejacket if I didn't." We were able to get the poor lad transported into a bright Warwickshire village, where he said, "that the blue sky and the birds singing were sure to cure him." He, however, gradually passed away, but our fund was able to help him to the end.

Why do these recollections about invalided men fill my heart as I write this chapter about the sailors' wives? Because in all cases of married men, the wives and the children suffer. It may be said that every man should be insured, and that, in that case, sick pay would be drawn.

I for one have been very keen as to insurance, and I wish that every man in the service was insured for his own sake, and for the sake of those dear to him; but in that case, the country would have to raise his

pay. Unless he holds a good rating, Jack has not a living wage for himself, his wife and children. I have a paper before me asking for a little temporary help for the wife of an able seaman who has just been transferred to a sea-going ship, and his pay has become monthly instead of weekly, consequently the wife will have no money for a month.

The filled-up form reveals the following facts: "Wife aged 27; one child two years old, expecting another in September; of good character; weekly rent three shillings; has contracted no debts except the rent, since the husband went away. Weekly pay twelve shillings." On the back of the form these words are written: "Mrs. ——'s husband is sent away in the *Commonwealth*; she will get no pay for a month. It is the old story of weekly pay shifted to monthly. And now the woman has nothing, and is expecting a baby in September. Could Miss Weston give her a weekly allowance till the pay comes?" Of course I do this, and have done it in hundreds of cases.

Technically, Jack in time gets all his pay, all that is due to him; practically, his wife and children are starving. To save on small pay with a young family is impossible, and it is equally impossible to insure. And of course the chief sufferers are the wives and little ones.

It may be grimly remarked that the bluejacket, until he attains a higher rating, has no business to marry. But whatever we do, let us be human; our men have not many comforts; the lower deck of a ship-of-war contains few of the amenities of home. If the pay of men of higher ratings is suffi-

cient, I hold that the pay of men of lower ratings should be such that the wife and little ones can be supported, with a margin for a rainy day.

With the wives in our work we, of course, include the children. It was at first a little difficult to know what we could do for them, but the question as to the boys was solved many years ago by some of the men serving on foreign stations writing to ask me "whether I could do a little for them, by teaching them obedience; they were so disobedient and unruly that their mothers did not know what to do with them."

I talked it over with some of my workers, and as our minds run on naval lines, we thought of a Naval Brigade; to gather them together, to put them into uniform, to have them taught drill, and, with it, obedience and respect, uniting temperance work, Bible-classes, cricket, football, swimming, &c., &c.

Volunteers soon joined, and company after company was formed, and the boys were very enthusiastic about it. I believe that this is the first Naval Brigade started in this country. The Admiralty lent me a 7-pounder gun for gun drill; they are smart little fellows, and we train them in various ways.

The fathers of many of them are on active service in China, Australia, and various other parts of the world, and the boys are getting a little headstrong for mother, so they come to the Sailors' Rests at Portsmouth and Devonport on several evenings of the week. They have drill and gun-drill, compass work, signalling. They are all total abstainers, and twice a week a splendid Bible-class of ninety strong is held. They have also cricket

and football teams, and have won several matches, and also a swimming club.

They have been inspected by the Commodore at the Royal Naval Barracks, Portsmouth, and that officer, although a very strict disciplinarian, expressed his great pleasure and approval at their general appearance. I append the Memorandum that I received from him :—

"MEMORANDUM

"ROYAL NAVAL BARRACKS, *Portsmouth.*

"*It gave me very great pleasure to see how well turned out and smart the companies, field guns' crew, and band of the Royal Sailors' Rest Boys' Brigade were, when inspected on the 13th inst.; and in my judgment this reflects the very greatest credit on the commanding officers, the officers, instructors, and all concerned.*

"A. GALLOWAY, *Commodore.*

"TO MISS WESTON, LL.D.,
Royal Sailors' Rest, Portsmouth."

This inspection has cheered up all the officers and boys. They will, I hope, still further distinguish themselves, and still better, I hope that they will grow up earnest good temperance men. Very many go into the navy, their fathers' profession. We give them a certificate when they enter, and their drill with us saves them some months' training. These Naval Brigades are being largely taken up in the country, and are turning out a brilliant success, and our commanding officers at Portsmouth and Devonport have good reason to be proud of their respective corps.

A facetious bluejacket once said when assisting a lady to alight from a railway carriage: "Ladies first, as they have no vote." Quite true, our sailors' and marines' daughters rank second to none, as far as we are concerned, and the ladies working with us take the greatest interest in them.

We have a girls' branch of the *Royal Naval Temperance Society*, with their bright gatherings, socials, games, excursions into the country, &c. Bible-classes and ambulance classes are always going on, especially the first-named, and many of our girls and boys also have joined the *Royal Naval Christian Union* as Associates, and will, we hope, go on to full membership.

This work has been carried on in Devonport and Portsmouth for some years, and it is starting at Chatham; we are now welcoming many of the members to the sailors' meetings, as they are married into the service and are making good wives and mothers, and many of them are earnest and devoted Christians.

Our sailors' and marines' wives, both at Devonport and at Portsmouth, are very close to our hearts; we give them our love, and we know that we have theirs, and we can truly say that the bluejackets' wives and families are near and dear to us.

The Royal Hospital School at Greenwich educates and trains the sons of seamen and marines for the navy, and for civil life as well. I have paid many visits to the grand old historic pile of Greenwich Hospital, and when I get among the boys, as the friend of their fathers and mothers, I feel quite at home.

I must chronicle a happy visit to the dear old place from my diary. This meeting was only one of many extending back into the seventies, but this is a recent one. I went to the Royal Hospital School, Greenwich. The meeting was held in the gymnasium, which was lighted by lines of electric lights, and nearly 1000 boys were assembled there. They gave me a most hearty reception, and listened to all that I had to say to them with great attention.

When I had finished one of the officers spoke to them, and told them that in 1875 he had been present at a meeting that I held in those early days on board H.M.S. *Impregnable* at Devonport; and I am glad to say that he had never forgotten the words spoken then, and told the boys that they had been the inspiration of his life.

As I left to return to London the boys gave me a real naval cheer, their caps flying into the air like a hailstorm. We established a strong bond of union that night, for I told them that as I had been their fathers' friend, so I hoped to prove myself their friend as well. There was a prize-giving, and the boys came up in single file to receive the prizes from my hands. I did feel thankful to be able to visit the old historic place once again.

In the early part of 1903 a great sorrow came to Miss Wintz in the loss of her mother, and I may truly say that Mrs. Wintz was a second mother to me. When I first went to Devonport she opened her house to me, and gave me a mother's welcome, and, as I have recorded, our first Sailor Boys' Bible-class was held in her kitchen. "Mrs. Wintz's kitchen" was well known in the navy, and bearded

men, when they returned from foreign service to our Sailors' Rest, would say, "That dear old kitchen; I've never forgotten those meetings when I was a boy."

I always felt what a share Mrs. Wintz had in this work; she gave me her daughter, whose splendid co-operation and help I have always had. She loved her children fondly, and, like my own mother, would have rejoiced to have had them round her; but God's work and God's will came first, the sacrifice was made willingly and lovingly, and to the end of a long life she was always deeply interested in our progress and success.

She had many sorrows in her early days; the death of her eldest son, when a promising student at Heidelberg University, was a blow that she never really got over. Years afterwards her husband, for whose sake as a girl she left her relatives and friends for distant Switzerland, passed away somewhat suddenly. Mr. Wintz was every inch a gentleman and a Christian, and his widow mourned his loss for thirty-seven years before she went to join him.

One of her later sorrows was the death, by drowning, of her grandson, Midshipman Percy Henderson Brown, of H.M.S. *Warspite;* he was a most promising young officer, and, alas, was lost with other messmates by the capsizing of a boat. This sorrow was in later years followed by the loss of two daughters; still, happy and serene, she lived until the age of eighty-seven, and then went to be with Christ.

CHAPTER XXI

UNDER THE SEARCHLIGHT

How brilliantly the searchlight starts and blazes from the battleship, how it pulsates and quivers over the dark sky, fades, then streams out again; every wave, every boat, and even every buoy stands out in sharp outline, and woe to the torpedo-boat that shall steal into that pathway of brightness.

The business of the searchlight is to show all surroundings brilliantly, and to prevent an enemy from approaching; as I work out these remembrances of my life, the "searchlight" brings important points into prominence. I have tried to do this throughout this book, and now I turn the handle of the searchlight again, and it shines upon a handsome pile of buildings and lights up a spacious and, for its size, a beautiful hall.

It is the "Victoria Memorial Hall" of the Royal Sailors' Rest at Devonport, and Admiral Lord Charles Beresford stands upon the platform; the hall is being opened, and Lord Charles is speaking of the work that we have been enabled to do for thirty years, and he speaks in no measured terms. He speaks as a sailor, well knowing the trials and troubles of his shipmates of the lower deck, and it is easy to see from whence the deep affection flows that

"AT HOME" TO RUSSIAN SAILORS.

is borne to him by the men of his own profession, and by the navy at large ; he is a man we should declare at once to be a captain of men, and we may well let the searchlight play upon him for a moment.

He has all that strange, undefinable quality of command, with the born fighting ability so characteristic of men of Celtic blood, which always goes to make up the successful sailor or soldier. The firm-knit figure, the square-set shoulders, the brisk manner, the compact self-confidence, self-reliant bearing, all speak of a leader in battle, a personality in council, and a figure in the world. "The man behind the gun," of whom Lord Charles thinks so much, knows his worth well ; hundreds of men would follow him anywhere, and the nation may depend upon Jack's judgment.

There was a great gathering in the Victoria Memorial Building of the official world on Tuesday, January 17, 1905, when the new hall, with the cabins above it, was opened by Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, who had travelled from London on purpose to help me, by thus opening the hall. He carried all before him by his sailor-like words and his breezy manner ; applause rang through the building, and the bluejackets who had mustered to greet him were loud in their approval of all that he said.

The following is a verbatim report :—

In a few sailor-like words Lord Charles said : "I should like to mention some facts which I think ought to be known more publicly throughout the Empire. I find that this block of buildings above and below have cost no less than £20,000, all of

which has been got by Miss Weston and Miss Wintz to better the condition, to make more comfortable in every way the British man-of-warsman.

"I find that these Rests at Portsmouth, Devonport, and Keyham have cost no less than—Portsmouth, £140,000; Devonport, £120,000; and Keyham, £8000; making a grand total of over a quarter of a million sterling. What I want to impress upon you is that all that money has been got together by the energy and the unselfish work—voluntary work—of Miss Weston and Miss Wintz.

"In one month alone men-of-warsmen have taken 12,610 beds, and 1845 men have been put up on couches, or on the floor, because there was not sufficient accommodation in the cabins and beds. In one year there had been 352,345 beds taken by British men-of-warsmen.

"Another point I want to impress upon you is that these great establishments are entirely self-supporting, and all these properties have been placed by Miss Weston and Miss Wintz in the hands of trustees, so that in after years they are insured for all time for the benefit of British sailors. I cannot emphasise too strongly what these figures mean.

"It means that men can come ashore with their money, and go to a respectable comfortable home. They can put their money and clothes here, and live like gentlemen. The comfort and convenience of the men, I am very glad to say, is more studied than it used to be. There is more sympathy between officers and men.

"In the old days a great number of 'disagreeables' existed, and the insubordination which occurred

undoubtedly existed because there were no Rests of this class. And then the Admiralty is going to do a great deal more by giving two years' commissions, and more leave to enable the men to get home to their families. I let the men go on shore on every available opportunity, and the result has always been in my experience that they loyally backed me up, and I have had no leave-breaking at all hardly.

"Another point is that the Rests Miss Weston has established are of great good to the State; anything that makes the men more contented and happy is directly to the benefit of the State and the Empire. I won't say to Miss Weston and to Miss Wintz how grateful the officers and men are to them for their loyal energy, and their indefatigable work and zeal, in having got the public to subscribe and start the 'Rests' of this character. I understand Germans, Americans, and Japanese have all sent personally to know how to run these institutions.

"Then, besides this, in the time of bereavement these ladies give *immediate help* to the sorrowing wife, mother, or other relative, and by the confidence of the public they are able to give first aid at the moment of terrible solitude. Among the cases mentioned are the *Eurydice*, *Atalanta*, *Serpent*, *Victoria*, *Condor*, *Orwell*, and quite lately the submarines; all the poor relatives of the crews of these ships were *immediately relieved* by Miss Weston.

"How happy must these ladies be to see the success of their gigantic undertaking. I congratulate them on the part of the navy. I congratulate ourselves on having such deservedly popular friends, as they have proved themselves to be."

Several officers spoke most warmly and kindly, including Admiral Robinson and Captain Lowry, now Admiral Lowry, one of our trustees. The Earl of Mount-Edgcumbe, who has been a kind friend to my work for many years, said that he had noted all that we had done from the earliest date; he had also known Lord Charles Beresford in his breezy days, and it was good to hear his words, and to see the old chivalrous spirit in him, deepened by the responsibilities that life had brought. He hoped that war might be far distant, but, if necessary, naval officers and men would know how to defend their country.

Lord Charles, in responding to the vote of thanks, said he knew perfectly well when they went into action and won that most of them (the officers) got covered with ribbons and that sort of thing; but that the "man behind the gun" did not get all the credit he ought to receive. If the "man behind the gun" did not get the orders and the ribbons, they all equally shared in the honours won by the navy.

His brother-officers were all absolutely the same in their opinion; whether they were high or low they gratefully appreciated what they owed to the men they commanded, and therefore he considered it an honour when Miss Weston asked him to perform the ceremony, for the reason that his brother-officers and himself took the greatest interest in the welfare and contentment of their men.

It was quite a red-letter day in my life, and from that day to this the hall has done yeoman service to the men of the fleet.

We turn the searchlight off this bright opening, on a January day, on to the halls themselves, and the class-rooms connected with them, and the work carried on in them. My great desire has always been to lead our men and those dear to them to that knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, which, apart from all creeds, leads to salvation.

Our platform is broad ; we do not try to win men for denominationalism of any kind, but for Christ ; and they are free to join any section of the outward Church that they may wish. Our great desire is that they may belong to the Church Invisible. Our work is a pioneer work ; we get men in often when very far out of the way, and we present the simple truths of the Gospel in an unconventional manner.

Every Sunday evening our halls at Devonport and Portsmouth are crowded by seafaring men, soldiers and marines, sailors' wives and mothers, pensioners from the service, &c., &c. The platform is filled by bluejackets and marines, and a small string and brass band leads the singing ; the service is opened with a short prayer, often offered up by a bluejacket ; the hymns are given out, and the lesson read by service men ; the address may be given by a clergyman, a Christian officer, a bluejacket or marine, a layman, and sometimes by myself. The attention of the great audience is most striking.

The whole service never lasts more than an hour, and is followed by a short bright meeting of half-an-hour for singing and prayer. At this meeting many decisions are made, and many a heart and life is surrendered to God, and the reality of it is testified to by a changed life altogether. I could give count-

less instances of this, and I will turn the searchlight on a few.

"'Twas all my chum Jim, and there he sits in the hall," said a young sailor with H.M.S. *Excellent* on his cap one Sunday afternoon in our hall. We were having our "At Home," which is a real At Home attended by from 500 to 700, mostly seamen, marines, and their friends; this young fellow stood up to speak of the power of real Christianity.

"Jim and I," continued he, "came outside this hall one Sunday afternoon some weeks ago; we were both wild young fellows, but we liked to hear the singing. 'Let's go in,' said Jim to me. 'I shan't,' I said; 'I ain't going to be laughed at.' 'You won't be laughed at,' said Jim. 'Come along, I'll go with you; I likes the sound of them hymns.' We went in and I enjoyed it very much, so much that I determined to sign the pledge at the end of the meeting; and so I did, and the next day I wrote to the old people at home (I didn't trouble them much with letters) and told them what I had done.

"In about a week I got a letter from my brother George saying he was so glad to hear of what I had done, that it was a good step to take, and now would I not go farther and give my heart and life to the Saviour who died to redeem me?

"I went to the Sailors' Rest again and yielded myself to Christ, and I feel a new man; but Jim wasn't changed.

"How I longed for Jim to love Christ too; but though he brought me into the meeting, he didn't care about it.

"Well, I thought, God hears prayer and answers it

too, so the shortest way to get my chum converted is to pray for him, and I did.

"One night I was at the prayer-meeting at the Sailors' Rest, and when the leader said, 'For whom shall we pray?' I said, 'For my chum Jim.'

"We did pray for him, and the next morning Jim, with tears in his eyes, said, 'Ted, old boy, I was praying for myself last night, and God has answered my prayers, and I'm a happy man.' So that me and my chum we are more friends than ever."

Another figure comes before me—a bright, sunny, stalwart and yet rough-looking young seaman. He was once an infidel and a terrible blasphemer, given up to drink and every kind of iniquity. Often he had dared God openly, and was known on board his ship as one who made a mock at all religion, and declared that he believed in neither God nor Devil, Heaven nor Hell.

He did believe in the Sailors' Rest, because, he said, "he could see it; but Miss Weston must have a jolly good reason for carrying it on: no doubt she was lining her pockets."

Thank God, the Sailors' Rest was destined to be the best place he ever came into. One evening a tea was being given to a party of seamen in my dining-room, and this man was invited. Seeing, with him, was believing, and the tea and cake, jam and Devonshire cream were very real, and the bright faces and happy laughter of that tea-party. He enjoyed it very much, and when the harmonium was opened, and the singing begun, he felt it would be rude to go.

After the meeting one of my workers, himself once a seaman, had a long talk with him, and he came out

with all his old arguments. "No, he didn't believe in a God, and never should." As the two talked they had walked out of the building into the open air.

"Look," said the Christian man, laying his hand on the bluejacket's arm, and pointing to the glittering stars; "if there is no God, who made these?" The young seaman looked up at their pure bright radiance, as he had done many times before when keeping watch on board his ship, but on this night they seemed to speak to him, and old words, long forgotten, rang through his heart—"THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD, AND THE FIRMAMENT SHOWETH HIS HANDIWORK." Deeply impressed he said to the Christian man by his side, "If you can pray, pray for me."

In our Sailors' Rest we have a prayer-room, which has been consecrated by many a true conversion; the two men went up and closed the door, and very earnest prayers ascended from that Christian seaman that all his brother's sin and blasphemy might be pardoned.

That prayer was answered. He gave up all his infidelity, signed the temperance pledge, and attended our Bible-classes and meetings, gladly testifying how Christ had met him like Saul of Tarsus, and had pardoned him.

I could tell of hundreds of such cases, but these two will illustrate my point, and will show the work that we desire, by God's blessing, to do.

One more little incident I feel that I must turn the searchlight upon, and although it is unconnected with the navy, the very same facts have happened,

and are happening in our Sailors' Rests, to our joy and rejoicing.

Not long ago an infidel lecturer was speaking in a large town in the north of England, bringing all the most powerful arguments he could to bear on the absurdity of believing a word of the Bible. He concluded by saying, "Now I hope I have succeeded in explaining to you that the existence of Jesus Christ is a myth."

He had hardly finished speaking, when a working-man, who had entered in his grimy and toil-stained clothes, stood up. All present never forgot the look on his honest face as he said: "Sir, I'm only a working-man, and I don't know what the word 'myth' means. I suppose it means that things that we thought all right aren't all right, and you've been trying, as I can see, to explain them away. But you can't explain ME?

"Three years ago I had a miserable home; I neglected my wife and children, I cursed and swore, I drank all my wages away, till some one came along and showed me the love of God and of His Son Jesus Christ.

"And now all is different; we have a happy home, I love my wife and children, I feel better in every way myself, and I've given up the drink. A new soul has taken possession of me since Christ came into my life.

"'Sir,' and his face was all aglow, 'can you explain ME?'"

The lecturer had no explanation to give, and that working-man sent people home feeling that Jesus Christ was anything but a myth.

We will focus now on our class-rooms. We have meetings for the study of the Bible, and also for prayer, and a quiet room in each of our Sailors' Rests, where men so minded can talk or pray together, read their Bibles, and consult modern books on the study of the Scriptures; sometimes a pleasant little tea-party is held there, especially on Sunday afternoons, for men who have no homes.

All the spiritual work focuses into the *Royal Naval Christian Union*, all the temperance work into the *Royal Naval Temperance Society*, while ambulance work, night schools, &c., &c., hold a position of their own. We are bound by our trust-deed to carry on spiritual, moral, and any other work for the benefit of our men, their wives, and families. Frequently four or five meetings are going on at one time.

We have splendid electric lanterns at each Sailors' Rest, and we make good use of them in the winter, and we have also a bioscope for living pictures, which are a great delight. While we teach the old truths, we desire to move with the times as to everything that can impress the heart and bring those truths home. God's Holy Spirit alone can do the great work, but God works by means, and whether in the hall or the institute, we want to use all to His glory. Our meetings are always full; indeed the crowd of people outside before the doors are opened is something like the sight outside a theatre when a popular play is on.

As a searchlight is specially directed now on our halls and the work connected with them, let it shine on the R.N.T.S.

The *Royal Naval Temperance Society* is going ahead fast—the weekly gatherings of the members are a sight to see—such enthusiasm and stir, and the committees being formed, members receiving honours, fresh members joining. Over a thousand gallant service men have been at these meetings at the two Sailors' Rests during the last few weeks. Many have become members by signing the total abstinence promise, and receiving their card and badge of membership.

Other officers, firmly convinced that one of the greatest helps to a virile navy is the temperance cause, have given me their names as patrons of the Society. Admiral H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, through Sir Arthur Bigge, wrote to tell me that he had received the Report of the *Royal Naval Temperance Society*, and would become one of its patrons with pleasure.

The following is a characteristic letter from Admiral Lord Charles Beresford :—

"H.M.S. *King Edward VII.*, CHANNEL FLEET.

"DEAR MISS WESTON,—*Many thanks for your letter and the Report of the Royal Naval Temperance Society. The aims, object, and work of the Society is doing an immense amount of splendid work in the service, and to the energy of the Society, I am sure, can be traced the marked improvement to be observed throughout the navy with regard to temperance. May all success attend the efforts of yourself and your co-workers.—Yours very sincerely,*

"CHARLES BERESFORD."

Now for another moment we will focus the light upon an up-to-date letter from a bluejacket on the Mediterranean station, and we shall see that Christian life in the navy is not all rose water, nor do we wish it to be so; we want Christian men in the service to have plenty of real backbone, and not to be of the jellyfish type. "Christian work in the navy is increasing, though it is greatly persecuted. Of course, the condition of a Christian in the navy is greatly different to this condition in civilian life.

"In the navy we have to live with men from year's end to year's end. We are always in their company, always working with the same men, and example testifies more than anything else.

"Of course, after the day's work you can't go home and go to prayer-meetings and get away from sin and temptation; you are always in the midst of it. Christian work is greatly increasing through the grand efforts of Miss Weston. We have a lot to put up with in my ship. The crew number 790, and the Christians number eight, so we have to be continually watching and praying.

"Though we get made fun of we get admired, because they know we are men that can be trusted; they know that we are right. The men that persecute us most are the men who know that we are right, and that they are wrong. The best thing to testify, as I said, is example.

"Men are watching you in everything you do. They listen to your conversation, they are always ready to find fault, and they put temptations in your way, and they do things to try to make you lose your temper. But, thank God, He is always by our side to help us.

"Sometimes we get permission to hold upper deck meetings. We get plenty to join in with us, and some join in for the purpose of annoying us. The average bluejacket is fond of singing. We get plenty of names, such as 'Bible-thumper.' I have been in this ship for nearly two and a half years; we have been on the Mediterranean station all the time.

"When we commissioned we had two Christians in the ship, and now there are several, and we are hoping shortly to have some more come over on God's side. I can say what it says in the 2 Sam., chap. xxii. verse 33. Will you please pray that God will bless the work in the navy, and that those that are Christians will stand firm? We are praying for you in the homeland."

Every word that this man says is true, and his experience is repeated on board almost every ship.

When these men come home, they make for the Sailors' Rest, and naturally expect to find something going on to help them. I have a band of excellent workers, men who have been in the service and know the ropes; they are always about the Sailors' Rests, ready to chat with men, to read or pray with them, and to help them in every way.

I can never get out of sight of our sailor lads; we have so many about us, who are out and out on the right side; of course, being young, they are optimistic, and often cheer us up. I feel as if I could never really grow old while these dear lads are around me. So I must once more focus the searchlight upon them, or rather, perhaps, on their letters, which often come to me.

I had a party of boys ashore at Portland to have tea with me, and I also went on board the *Boscawen* to have a talk with them, and I told them that I should be so glad to hear from any of them if they liked to write to me. A few days later a note, written on cream-laid paper, with a blue and gold forget-me-not in the corner (he must have gone ashore to buy it), came from one of the same boys.

He evidently had not forgotten the afternoon that we spent together, but looked back upon it with tender feelings. Perhaps I cannot do better than give his letter entire :—

"H.M.S. *Boscawen*, PORTLAND.

"DEAR MISS WESTON,—I now take the great pleasure of writing to ask you for two of the photos that we had taken at the Rest. I hope that you will forgive me for asking for two, only one of my chums wanted one when he knew I was writing to you. I am certain you will oblige me.

"Dear Mother (I might say), it seems so nice to have another mother to write to again, as I lost my poor mother ; we all thought about you last Tuesday around here, and wishing we were at the Sailors' Rest again ; but the time will soon come when I hope we shall be able to come again. Please excuse bad writing.—I remain yours truly,

"JOHN H——."

And I must give yet another, for a letter from a sailor boy always cheers my heart :—

"H.M.S. *Black Prince*, MESS NO. 25,
QUEENSTOWN, IRELAND.

"DEAR MISS WESTON,—I now take the greatest of pleasure in answering your kind and welcome letter, which I received all right, hoping this will find you quite well, as it leaves me here at present.

"I am getting on very well, and I will soon be losing two of my chums, Nesbitt and Black. I am very glad to say that you send them letters and give them good advice. Nesbitt was the boy who asked me to lead a Christian life, and we used to meet in the schoolroom of an evening and read a passage out of the Bible and say a prayer each. I shall miss him when he goes. He is going with the brig next Monday, so I shall have to pull along by myself, and I do hope I shall succeed.

"If I stick to God He will stick to me, and will see me all right, but it is hard work. If I turn to the right there is temptation waiting me, and if I turn to the left, go forward, or turn round there is temptation. And if your mates notice that you don't curse, they will mock and laugh at you, and try to make you curse. But if ever I fall I go straight to God and tell Him my trouble.

"I thank you very much for the little book you sent me. When I read it I gave it to a boy who sleeps alongside of me, and he asked me would I be mates with him, and I said I would, and he asked me to say a prayer and let him follow me. The only prayer he knows is the Lord's Prayer, so I have started to struggle along with him, and proves successful so far. I must now close my letter,

so good-bye, and God be with you till we meet again. —I remain yours truly,

"JAMES BARROW."

Now how can these sailor lads die? The search-light once again will show this up. One case out of numbers that I can remember. Not very long ago, in the daily papers, there was an account of the accidental shooting of a young seaman at a rifle range in Ireland, and his patriotic desire to be buried at sea.

This young fellow was known to us, and was about to join our *Royal Naval Christian Union.* I give a letter written to me by the chaplain of the *Albion*:—

"DEAR MISS WESTON,—One of our boys, James F. Coleman, expressed a desire three months ago to join the *Royal Naval Christian Union.* He filled in his paper on December 18th, so that we should have sent it to you in a day or so.

"He was a good lad, but God took him to Himself yesterday. While at pistol practice some one accidentally fired a shot that went through Coleman's chest. He lived from three o'clock until half-an-hour past midnight. It was impossible to save his life. He was a brave lad, for he was quite clear-headed for some hours before he died, and was peaceful and happy when told of the coming change.

"He looked so bright when I whispered to him the first verse of '*Jesu, lover of my soul,*' and afterwards he said, 'Let my mother and sister know that I am dying, and send my ditty-box and cap to my mother, and my kit to my chum, and I should like, if it could be, to be buried at sea.'

"He was so thoughtful and unselfish, a great example to me of the peace and love that fills the hearts of those who are close to Jesus. We said together '*The Lord is my shepherd*,' &c. We may be sure that his Father had a bright home prepared for that sailor-boy. Will you write to his mother?"

I need not say that I did this, and received a sorrowful but loving letter back.

The dying wish of the young sailor was reported to the authorities, who ordered that the warship *Albion* should steam out into the ocean, that he might lie in a sailor's grave. And so Coleman went home.

We looked for him to be an earnest worker in the navy, but the Good Shepherd took him to the land where there shall be no more sea.

CHAPTER XXII

"THERE'S SORROW ON THE SEA"

WHEN H.M.S. *Eurydice* went down off the Isle of Wight, her Captain, Captain Marcus Hare, R.N., went down at his post, and when, months afterwards, the ship was raised and towed into Portsmouth harbour, his writing-desk was found, and in it, among a number of letters and papers, a piece of poetry which he had written in more than one album, "THERE'S SORROW ON THE SEA."

All who know the sailor's life know this full well. Sometimes the sorrow, as a great national catastrophe, bursts suddenly, and the smaller incidents, none the less sad, go to swell the dirge, "*There's sorrow on the sea.*" Each incident and each catastrophe has its points of interest, whether ashore or afloat. Last year our hearts were stirred to their depths by the loss of the *Tiger* and the *Gladiator*, and by minor accidents to the *Gala* and the *Britannia*. When I think of the two first-named, I scarcely know how to write, my eyes and my heart are so full of tears. Disaster has succeeded disaster in our navy, and each one has told its tale of death.

Here at Portsmouth, looking over Spithead and the Isle of Wight, I seem to be looking on a cemetery, a God's acre; for within a few miles' radius how

many of my friends sleep until the resurrection morning.

One quiet day before Easter H.M.S. *Tiger*, with others of the big fleet of which she was a small unit, went out for night-manœuvring with lights out, about eighteen miles to the south of St. Catherine's Light-house, on the Isle of Wight.

The mimic battle began ; and how was it ? Who shall say ? The vast hull of H.M.S. *Berwick* towered over the torpedo destroyer, and, spite of all that could be done, the collision took place ; and the collision was destruction. The bows of the *Berwick* cut right through the ship, dividing her into two parts, which sank rapidly.

The Commander gave all possible orders, including one for the men to save themselves, and he went down with his ship. In an instant the sea was a blaze of light as all the searchlights of the ships were turned on, and boats were pulling in every direction to rescue the poor fellows struggling in the water and sinking one after the other.

There was no sign of panic or confusion, not at the moment of the crash, not when the ship parted asunder and went down under them. Officers and men were true to the best traditions of the service, and the country has good reason to be proud of her boys in blue.

In the water—one seizing an oar, others pieces of wreckage—they battled bravely with the waves, singing out one to another to keep up courage, and that all possible would be done to save them ; and this after the *Tiger* had made her final plunge, her boilers exploding and adding to the horrors of the scene.

All in the fore-part of the ship were drowned ; the poor fellows in the stokehole had no chance, the hatches were fastened down, and the ship was running under forced draught, going at tremendous speed.

The spectacle on that dark night in the channel—the roar of the escaping steam before the ship foundered, the men ranged quietly at their stations and waiting for orders, and then the waters closing over them—such calm courage and steadfast obedience to duty makes us think well of our naval service.

And what of the widows, the mothers, the fathers, not only in Portsmouth, but all over the country? The thirty-three brave men, exclusive of officers, whose homes were desolated? The little children whose fathers would never come back again?

The gunner of the ship was talking brightly to one of my people in the afternoon as he cycled from his home to go on board, little thinking that in a few hours he would be in eternity. Sad to say, all pay was stopped by death on that Thursday night in April, and our duty was very plain. We got the names and addresses, and we visited all living in the town, and communicated with all away. In local cases we were able to hand them at once the money that they would have received on the Friday night or Saturday morning, and we were also able to sympathise personally with them.

The letters that I have received from the grief-stricken relatives would bring tears to every eye, and I was rejoiced to find that they seemed to value the sympathy more than the help.

They told me how their boys used to talk at home of the Sailors' Rests, and what we either had done for

them or had tried to do ; and surely this was reward enough. I completed relieving as far as there was need, and I was glad to know that the fund inaugurated by the Mayor of Portsmouth had taken up the stricken ones, and would give pensions to all dependents. The balance of money in my keeping was handed over to the Mayor's fund. My work for the *Tiger*, which was first aid, closed then as far as money help was concerned.

We had hardly recovered from this blow when another, quite as crushing, came upon us. An April day, when May had nearly arrived, was ushered in by snow, driven by a fierce cutting gale from the north-east. The snow was a blizzard; at times no one could see more than a few rods before them.

On this fatal Saturday a cruiser, H.M.S. *Gladiator*, was coming from Portland to Portsmouth, where she was due at four o'clock. She had passed the Needles, and was off Hurst Castle, when the ss. *St. Paul*, twice her tonnage and going at twice her speed, and moreover, it is said, carrying a steel ram, struck her in a vulnerable point, and she sank in twenty minutes. Some of the men were terribly injured by the impact, others were drowned ; the death-roll totalled twenty-six.

The same obedience to duty was shown. The men mustered as if to quarters, and never attempted to leave the ship till the order was given and repeated by a warrant officer, who called out, "Every man for himself, and God for us all."

And then the desolated homes, wives rushing down to the Commander-in-Chief, shrieking in agony, others stunned and mute. Again we put our organi-

sation to work, but here we had to face a great difficulty. We could not get the names and addresses of the men, whose homes were scattered over the country, as the books had gone down with the ship ; but the Admiralty and Commander-in-Chief were most kind, and supplied me with information as quickly as possible. The Mayor telephoned asking me to do all possible until he should be able to take it up with his friends.

The *Gala* in the North Sea lost her Engineer-Lieutenant, who was killed in his cabin by the impact of the scout *Attentive*, again manœuvring at night with lights out.

The *Britannia* lost three poor stokers by the bursting of a boiler. They were scalded and burned so terribly that they died. I have my Naval Disaster Fund, from which I was able to draw. My desire is that I may be always ready, not only to help such calamities as those of the *Tiger* and *Gladiator*, but smaller ones, none the less pathetic in that no one knows of them.

Jack's kind-heartedness is proverbial and true. I received a letter from H.M.S. *Hart*, signed by representatives of H.M. destroyers in the China seas, enclosing the sum of £42, 1s. 1d., asking me to take charge of it and to spend it for the maintenance of the two little children of a dead shipmate whose wife died a few months ago. The letter is signed by men of various ratings, and runs thus :—

"H.M.S. *Hart*, CHINA STATION.

"MADAM,—We, the undersigned members of a committee formed for collecting contributions from the

torpedo-boat destroyers on the China Station for the benefit of two young children who have now become orphans through the death of their father, a leading stoker of this ship, who was accidentally drowned on May 6, 1906, at Shanghai, are taking the liberty of sending you the sum of £42, 1s. 1d. collected, to be put to the best use for the children's good, which we have every confidence it will be in your hands.

"These children had the misfortune to lose their mother a few months previous to the death of the father, and are now living with their grandmother. Trusting that we are not trespassing too much on your time and kindness of heart, we remain, yours faithfully."

Then come the signatures of petty officers and men.

There is a light side of Jack's life—merry Jack, as he is often called—but there is a tragical and sad side. A seaman—a petty officer—was dying in hospital, and some of my workers had regularly visited him. He had been one of my helpers. We had known him all through his life. He met his wife at the meetings at the Sailors' Rest at Portsmouth, and they had a flock of little children.

It was hard to go, a young man of twenty-nine years of age. "For myself," he said, "I am glad to go to be with Christ, but it is for my wife and little ones; but Miss Weston will take care of them." The next day a telegram reached us telling us that the man was dead, and that his wife, not knowing of his death, was on her way to see him. Would we meet her and break the news to her?

One of my workers did so. She seemed perfectly stunned, and only came to herself as she gazed on the calm dead face of her husband. We took care of her, and in a day or two there was a naval funeral. Our wreath, with loving sympathy, was laid on the coffin, and the widow and her little child, with some of ourselves, saw him laid in a sailor's grave.

Another sad accident occurred on board H.M. torpedo-boat *Ferret*. This was the case of a poor fellow, a first-class petty officer, falling overboard. He was promptly rescued, but life was extinct, and the doctors attributed his death to syncope, brought about by sudden immersion. Death appears to have been instantaneous. He left a delicate wife, to whom the news was broken somewhat suddenly. Her mind was nearly unhinged by the severity of the blow.

"To think that he should go away well and strong in the morning, and I was expecting him back to tea"—no wonder that reason almost totters. The brotherly kindness, not only of the officers and men of the *Ferret*, but also of the torpedo flotilla, has been most touching, and shows naval *camaraderie* in bright colours.

The Lieutenant-Commander of the *Ferret* and the Artificer-Engineer came to see me, and we had a long talk together as to the widow, and how we could help her in her sore strait. The men of the torpedo-boat and of the flotilla were anxious to do all possible themselves, so I offered that we would visit and cheer her as much as we could, and would also give her weekly pay until they were able to administer their fund.

One more life-story and I must turn to other themes. A bluejacket, another of our friends, was serving in the Mediterranean when he got bad news from home saying that his wife was very ill, and that her one desire was to see him. As he was a man of good character, his Captain gave him leave ; he was to go home in a returning ship, stay a few days, and return in another ship to his station.

He wrote to his wife and told her that he was coming. When he arrived at Plymouth, he delightedly thought that he would steal home, and what a surprise it would be. He crept up the stairs, the door was ajar, he saw her looking better and sitting up in bed.

"Here I am, my lass," he shouted. With a cry of delight she threw up her arms, and fell back *dead* —joy had killed her. Poor fellow, he was broken-hearted, and returned to his station feeling that he had accidentally killed her who was the light of his life.

Many an anxious heart has watched and waited through nights of storm and stress, and in many cases the husband or son came home no more. A little child, a member of my Children's Brigade, called out to his father one stormy night from his cosy crib in his father's dressing-room, "Dadda, the poor sailors are drowning," and the next minute, in his little night-shirt, he was kneeling by his bedside and praying the *"Lord Jesus to guard the sailors tossing on the deep blue sea."* Such pure young souls keep watch and ward over Jack.

About the year 1904 an interesting incident occurred connected with the Russo-Japanese war.

As I shall presently narrate, we knew the Japanese sailors well, having often welcomed them at the Sailors' Rests, but we had not then met the Russians. Somewhere, I think in 1903, two Japanese ships of war sailed from Genoa for the far East, commanded by British officers and manned by British seamen. War had not then been declared, but it was trembling in the balance. It was a plucky thing to take those ships out, but it was done. The English surgeon failed at the last moment, but a Japanese naval surgeon took his place.

On arrival at Yokohama Captain Paynter, of the *Kasuga*, offered the doctor the usual fee. He declined, saying that it was too much, and on the Captain pressing it, he said, "Send twenty guineas to Miss Weston, and ask her to use it some way for the good of the British Blue, whom I greatly admire, and if my name can be associated with it I shall be very pleased." A bath cubicle was set aside. The following letter came to me from Dr. Suzuki, this Japanese naval doctor :—

"I.J.M.S. *Yayayama*, OFF PORT ARTHUR.

"DEAR MISS WESTON,—I duly received your kind letter, and a copy of your monthly magazine *Ashore and Afloat*, in which I am glad to find a pretty story about me. I see that you have appropriated my contribution to a bath cabin, and I shall feel very happy if it is of use to your bluejackets. My sympathy and interest is very deep in your good work among the men.

"Our navy has taken after you, and, to my great joy, I can tell you that now we have Sailors' Rests

in every port throughout Japan. Hoping that you will come to Japan some day to see how happy our bluejackets are in the Sailors' Rests, and wishing you every prosperity in your work, believe me yours very truly,

"T. SUZUKI."

I think that it may be thought that I paint the British bluejacket in too rosy colours. I ought to know something about him, for, as the Devonshire people say, I have wintered him and summered him for over thirty years. I know the bluejacket of the older times, and I know the bluejacket of the present date, and the great difference between them, which will probably be accentuated by time.

The sailor pure and simple has disappeared with the sails that he used to manage. "Going aloft," "furling sails," "smart royal yardsmen," all these have passed away, probably never to return. Swedish drill and other athletics are relied on to keep up muscle in the present mastless ships. Education has advanced enormously, and has brought many advantages with it, and the clean, smooth-shaven face of the twentieth-century bluejacket has replaced the bearded, jolly, happy-go-lucky face of the man of older type.

To provide a home for Jack and to run it for him is not all easy sailing, and I do not advise any one who wants to have "a quiet time of it" to run a Sailors' Rest nowadays. I sometimes get blamed for things for which I am not responsible, but I have many brave and bold champions on the lower deck who stand up vigorously for me.

A friend of mine, travelling by rail, met a tall, powerful bluejacket, a stoker, going on leave. He began to talk about the Sailors' Rest, and said what a home it had been to him. "I'll tell you what," he continued, "I came to Portsmouth a drunkard, but Miss Weston took me by the hand and made me what I am. I hear her run down pretty well by some chaps on board, but I get up and I answer them, and explain it all to them. If they don't see their mistake and say they're sorry, then I up and lays them down quite gentle-like on their backs on the deck, and I don't hear any more of it. That's the best way to settle up these sort of things."

I look upon the Fleetman as my friend simply because he is in the navy. I am only too glad to help him as far as it lies in my power, and I always speak well of him. The question has been put to me :

A "*True Blue*," what is he? The "*True Blue*" taken at his best, and it is always well to look on the sunny side, is a very fine fellow. Bright, cheery, and sunny-faced, picturesque and stalwart, he stands true to his old friends, as he stands true to his country.

Brave to a fault, he is ready to do or to dare anything ; the greater the danger the more eager he is to face it. When volunteers are called for the difficulty lies in the numbers that come forward. When a ship is in danger through some dreaded explosion, the "*True Blue*" is calm and obedient ; he never leaves his post.

Brave Stoker Lynch rescued a shipmate at the cost of his own life. Chief Stoker Gee, late of H.M.S.

Blake, is of the stuff of which we are proud in our service; he went through fire and steam four times to rescue life, and brought out two men, but one, alas, was a corpse; the chief stoker was terribly burned and scalded. The "*True Blue*" carries his life in his hand, especially since the introduction of machinery. He is possessed of that grand quality, self-reliance; it is said that he is "sharp enough to see through a three-inch plank," and truly he is astute enough to meet danger and to see his way out of it.

In his home the "*True Blue*" often shines brightly. Here is a house known to me. A sailor's wife, quite a young woman, is dying of cancer, her agonies are fearful, and she has passed through many operations. There is no hope, and her one wish is to see her husband once more. This wish is gratified, the ship has returned and has brought back the absent husband—a sad home-coming truly. What a clever and gentle nurse that man-of-warsman made, and how he soothed and brightened the last weeks of his wife's life; but spite of his devoted care she passed away.

Early in the year 1907 we were invited to take counsel with the then Commodore of the Royal Naval Barracks, Portsmouth, towards the starting of a coffee canteen for the men, or rather, perhaps, we should say a "restaurant," where meals and refreshments could be obtained at any time, and from which all intoxicating drink was to be excluded. Some years before we had been asked to do the same for the Royal Naval Barracks at Devonport; we furnished the dining-room there from the Sailors'

Rest, and Miss Wintz gave all the information and training possible, and supplied a manager. This place worked splendidly ; the men thronged it and thoroughly appreciated it, and it went a long way towards keeping them steady. It was managed by a committee of officers and men, and was, after a while, taken in hand by contractors, and, as far as I know, is running satisfactorily now.

Having this experience we were very glad to help Commodore Galloway and Commander Sinclair at Portsmouth. Miss Wintz threw all her energy into it ; the place, which was sombre and gloomy before, had to be entirely altered and made bright and attractive ; difficulties were great, and red tape was somewhat in the way, but all was triumphantly overcome, and one of the best temperance restaurants of that date was opened in the Royal Naval Barracks, Portsmouth, and was speedily crowded with men.

It was quite delightful to see how they appreciated it. Having done all this, and having got it into good working order, we retired from the scene, Miss Wintz somewhat done up with all the extra work that it involved ; but it was a labour of love to us. This restaurant was much admired by the Admiralty, by Royalties, and by highly placed naval officers, who were taken round by the Commodore, and it was so popular that it speedily became too small.

Very soon afterwards the Admiralty voted a considerable sum of money, and a very much larger restaurant, gay with colours and the electric light, was built. Naval pictures of old sea fights and other

scenes decorated the walls, and the steaming urns, and the counters dressed with cold meats, pastries, buns, and all sorts of good things, welcome the blue-jacket to sit down and enjoy himself in this "*public-house without the drink.*"

CHAPTER XXIII

"THE FRENCH MAID"

THIS title is, I acknowledge, a strange one, but the story of my life would be incomplete if "*The French Maid*" was left out. But who is "*The French Maid*"? She was, and is not.

"*The French Maid*" was a public-house in Chandos Street, Portsmouth, next to our Diamond Jubilee Block, and for many years this public-house was a snare to the men, and also to the boys of the *St. Vincent*, who used to come up to the Sailors' Rest every Sunday and Thursday. The *St. Vincent*, like most of the other training ships, has paid the debt of nature, and the boys have been transferred to the training establishment at Shotley.

"*The French Maid*" was not much to look at, but I suppose would be termed a snug public-house, in a quiet side street. There was a drinking bar in front, and a small music-hall, with a stage gaudily dressed up, at the back. For many years we had been thinking about this public-house, and only wishing that it might come into the market, and that we might get it. We prayed about it often, but there seemed to be no sign whatever that it would come into our hands.

The "*Maid*" was very dangerous to the susceptible

sailors, and was well frequented. Many a fight took place outside in the street, and our building was more than once bespattered with blood and hair. Young seamen frequented it largely; men, according to the police reports, from eighteen to twenty-two years of age, the very lads that one wants to save, for their own sakes, and for their mothers' sakes.

At last an auspicious day dawned for us. The town authorities decided that "*The French Maid*" must be suppressed and her licence taken away, on account of a redundancy of public-houses in that neighbourhood; and then came on the moment for which we had waited and prayed. We made inquiries, and our movements were considerably quickened by the rumour that it might be acquired by an adjacent public-house, in a parallel street, anxious for extension, to be used for billiard-rooms, &c. So we determined to secure it if possible, and now we hold it for our men.

I made a great effort to advance the sum to pay for it, for it was then or never; and the sight of the keys upon my writing-table was a very pleasant sight indeed. "*The French Maid*" has ceased altogether now to attract bluejackets to evil, and will, I feel sure, do good in the future. I very soon received the money from my many friends to pay for it, and plans were got out for a large building to stand upon its site.

This building adjoins the Diamond Jubilee block, of which I have already given some particulars, and it will contain two hundred comfortable cabins.

I am always careful not to go into debt over buildings, and to expect the public to help me out. Some people say that it answers well for a society

to be some thousands of pounds in debt. I do not presume to say what is best for a society, but I know personally that it would not do for me.

Many years ago my accounts were once overdrawn, and we showed a deficit of some £700. It was not a very large sum, but, far from finding it interesting, my subscribers lectured me vigorously, saying that they thought that I never went into debt, that it was a very dangerous path for a personal worker to embark in, &c., &c. They, however, kindly sent the money to pay up the deficit, and I hope that I profited by their advice ; for although our ship has been in shallow water often, and our balance has been very small, we have never touched ground, but have always come out on the safe side.

Miss Wintz often astonishes people by revelations of the number of men frequenting the Royal Sailors' Rests during the year, and their feats as trenchermen. She gives the number of sleepers in one year as 378,375. Our clerical staff worked out the following amusing facts from these figures.

If the men stood with linked hands they would form a line 245 miles long, reaching from Paddington to Plymouth—this in a single year. The food consumed during this period was truly astonishing ; the oxen, sheep, pigs, &c., forming a procession nearly a mile long ; while the tea, coffee, and cocoa put away during that period would float a first-class torpedo-boat.

It is only right now that I should act as cicerone, and take each one reading this book round our great Institutes ; and then I will endeavour, by picking Miss Wintz's brains, to tell of the methods by which we

have brought this organisation up to the point at which it now stands. I hope that it may be a help to some who are embarking on the same crusade, although I well know that every decade brings its changes and developments, and that experience is a commodity that each one has to buy for himself.

To illustrate the truth of this, I will take my readers round the Sailors' Rest. The men are ashore ; it is a Saturday afternoon, and a great crowd blocks the booking-office, clamouring for beds, standing one behind the other, the *queue* stretching out and down the street.

The tickets are issued as fast as the sixpences are laid down, until all the beds are exhausted, and then there is a groan among the waiting ones, as the placard is hoisted up, "All beds booked," some five or six hundred ; then shake-downs, tables, chairs, &c., or a plank-bed on the floor.

After this glance at the booking-office, let us turn into the restaurant. As we are looking round on a Saturday evening in the winter, the restaurant is brilliant with electric light, and also with mirrors, colour, and silver urns. The marble-topped tables are crowded, and waiters are flying about.

The restaurant being open to the public, we see not only bluejackets, but their friends, wives, mothers, and sweethearts, while a few perambulators tucked away show the presence of King Baby. The noise, whirl, and clatter is something that must be heard to be understood ; the lifts are working rapidly, and down the speaking tubes hurry the orders, "sausages and mash for three," "fish for six," &c. A small fish supper on these busy evenings means about five

hundred portions. No wonder at Devonport that we have to send the horse and cart to the Barbican, to meet the trawlers, and to buy up fish wholesale.

For fish, eggs, sausages, &c., Jack shows an appetite begotten of the ozone of the ocean; for if the public help him on the Saturday evening, he has it all to himself on Sunday, when outsiders are excluded. The neat little bill of fare from Saturday night to Monday morning runs thus—1700 sausages, 2000 and odd eggs, 3000 rolls and butter, 80 gallons of tea, besides coffee and cocoa, 2 cwts. of bacon, 5 cwts. of fish, and endless smaller goods, bread and butter, tarts, cakes, &c.

A turn will bring us into the Petty Officers' Coffee-room. This room is spacious and handsomely fitted up, with its separate staff of waiters; and the petty officers, whose purses are longer, are to be seen indulging in roast fowl, grilled steaks, kidneys, and other luxuries. This room is also open to all; but here the barrier drops, and, with the exception of baths, the rest of the building, with all cabins and sleeping accommodation, is devoted to the service.

The Parcel Office on the ground floor is very busy, taking in parcels and giving them out; a bluejacket rides up on his bicycle, takes a ticket for his machine, which is forthwith wheeled off to the bicycle store, and he drops into the restaurant, or into the reading or smoking rooms.

As we go on, we pass through several reading-rooms, and also writing-rooms; men are asleep on the lounges, reading papers or books, or having a friendly chat or discussion. The last reading-room is the largest, very bright and spacious; here an electric piano discourses brilliant music or national

airs, and about twice a week a "Sing-Song" is held, in which the men take part.

But we must dive into the basement, and see the kitchens, and all the machinery that drives this great business. Putting Portsmouth and Devonport together, our staff numbers some two hundred men and women. Here is the kitchen. The chef and his staff, in their white caps, jackets, and aprons, are very busy, the stoves are full blast, and mighty joints of old English fare, roast beef, with its first cousin, corned beef, legs of mutton, and pigs galore; and the electric bell and speaking-tubes from the restaurant and coffee-room are going hard.

In another room the vegetables are washed and prepared; then the larder, and a very spacious washing-up room, connected with the restaurant by lifts, up and down which cups and saucers, plates, &c., travel, keeping three or four men fully employed.

As we pass on we come upon the bakehouse, with a staff of first-class bakers. The room is lined with white tiles; lighted by electricity; and from its huge steam ovens an endless stream of new bread, rolls, tarts, tartlets, turnovers, custards, cakes, &c., pour forth. The bakers are at their posts at four o'clock in the morning, sometimes earlier.

We follow the rolls to a room, where, under the natty fingers of women, they are split, buttered, and the nice slice of ham or beef inserted, making sandwiches. Jack cares nothing for the sandwich that the delicate lady produces from her handbag, or for similar articles served at the railway buffet. "Shavings and trash," he murmurs; "a man wants to feel something between his teeth."

We must pass on ; the steady throb of a powerful engine begins to sound in the distance, but first the storeroom, which occupies all the space under the large hall, must be inspected. It is a model of cleanliness, and is like a great wholesale store—sides of bacon, sacks of flour, chests of tea, hogsheads of sugar, kegs of butter, and all the countless accessories that are needed every day are here. All supplies are drawn from this store, and duly checked.

We now begin to see straps and whirling shafts. Here is the mineral-water plant, where gingerbeer, lemonade, and the hundred and one "ades" of various flavours, that go to make up temperance drinks, are made: machinery does almost all, even washing the bottles.

There is the sausage machine at work, everything so bright and clean, the sausage meat all prepared on the premises; one can almost say that the pig goes in at one end and comes out at the other—sausages! Another whirling affair, producing a great deal of starch, is washing and peeling potatoes ; all this machinery is a vast help.

Before we get to the engines, we must pause to look at the baths. Each bath is in its cubicle, and is a full-sized bath, of white glazed earthenware ; the hot and cold water taps are under the control of the bathmen ; radiators dry the towels. Each bath is lighted by electricity, and is kept scrupulously clean ; the same may be said of all the lavatories, with washing basins, barber's shop, &c., on which I have spent many thousand pounds. Gentlemen inspecting them say, "that they are equal to a first-class London club." I am describing all this as closely as I can,

but I do not wish to take any credit to myself, as all this organisation is the product not of one brain, but of many.

We open a door on which is painted "*No Admittance*," and the heat and whirl of the engine-room is upon us. These engine and boiler rooms are very spacious ; the huge boilers supplying baths and radiators meet us first ; a large pump is working hard, pumping water from a great reservoir under our feet, to the tanks at the top of the building, and all over it.

Farther on, an engine of 125 horse-power is working the dynamos which produce the electricity to light the great buildings: we have some thirty-five arc lamps, which light the Sailors' Rest outside, the hall, &c., also any amount of incandescent lights, and our "wiring," which extends for some miles if laid out straight, lights all parts of the structure, including the Diamond Jubilee block.

As we walk underneath we can hear a band, singing, and applause in the hall above. This is Saturday night, and the social is on, but other meetings are simultaneous ; a meeting for prayer in the small hall, and nice little gatherings of Christian and temperance seamen in the R.N.T.S. and R.N.C.U. club rooms upstairs.

We have seen a great deal, but we have not seen the dormitories ; they rise tier above tier, and they are all ready for their occupants, all clean and trim, the night watchmen bustling about, and showing "early birds" to their beds. The large billiard-room, with several tables, is full of eager faces and talk, and the click of the balls: no gambling,

I am glad to say, to our knowledge, spoils the fine game under our roof.

The Sailors' Rest is open all the twenty-four hours, and no one is turned away; our aim is to get all possible under our roof, and to try to do the best we can for them, so that every man shall have a chance; some are very lively, and give a good deal of trouble.

The buildings are patrolled by four night watchmen, and as the morning comes on, bells are rung all round the dormitories, and the stentorian voices of the watchmen call, as on board a man-of-war, "Show a leg, show a leg, hurry up for the five o'clock boats." Then again later, "Hurry up for the six o'clock boats;" and hundreds of feet are racing down the stairs. Breakfast is a pick-up—a cup of coffee and a roll, a cake, or a sandwich; and laughing and talking, 500 or 600 men, in some cases 1000 or 1200, stream out of the building, and away to ships or barracks.

I do not want to weary, but after this long tour it might be well to inquire the lines on which these great places are run, and the steps taken to ensure careful, methodical, and business-like working. The establishment is worked in departments.

The kitchen, the store, and dormitories; the restaurant, the watchmen and engineers' departments, have each a day and night staff of their own, and by this means none of the employés, except under the most exceptional circumstances, have to work more than eight or ten hours a day; and on Sunday, as far as possible, everybody is allowed half time off.

Many people have written to ask me about our gentlemen managers, and would I recommend them some one of the same sort. As we have long since dispensed with these gentlemen, and have run the Sailors' Rests on the departmental lines, I regret I have not been able to comply with these requests. Miss Wintz is assisted by her first lieutenants, who have thoroughly mastered the work (one at Portsmouth and one at Devonport). These ladies have the engagement and dismissal of the large staff entirely in their hands. The utmost contentment and happiness prevails among the servants; the food is good, and the hours on duty are not excessive. The receipts are carefully checked by means of a cash register, and banked daily by an official from the office. Everybody, from the chef downwards, has to render a daily, weekly, and monthly return; stock is taken every month, and a balance is struck after the allowance has been made for rates, taxes, depreciation. This system works admirably, and all leakages are quickly detected and stopped.

The work is never-ending, but, as far as possible, all is done to ensure success, and the immense masses of men using the Royal Sailors' Rests bear eloquent testimony to the management.

"No cup of tea anywhere like that at the Sailors' Rest," is the verdict of the sailors' wives, who crowd in with babies and children, after the Monday afternoon meeting, or when out shopping in the busy thoroughfare in which the Portsmouth Sailors' Rest stands.

Our other departments are carefully organised. Our subscriptions and donations, which go to philan-

thropic and religious work, are under my immediate supervision. I receive all gifts personally, and am responsible for them until banked, my accountant and a staff of clerks sending all receipts and reminders; the system of checking and counter-checking is carried through everything. All this has been in vogue for thirty years past, but it has been steadily built up on the foundation laid, and with, I think, good and solid results.

OLD SAILOR'S VISIT TO H.M.S. "VICTORY."

CHAPTER XXIV

HISTORIC SPITHEAD

I HAVE called this chapter "Historic Spithead." The windows of my room enable me to take it in in all its length and breadth. It is, I suppose, the most historic anchorage in the world, and is making history now. The old wooden walls used to moor here, and during wars with France and Spain awaited their orders or returned with their prizes triumphant, or sometimes struggled in almost done to death.

The old *Victory* lay here when Admiral Lord Nelson, amidst the cheers of the people, left the sally-port at old Portsmouth to go on board for the last time before the battle of Trafalgar; and here the *Royal George* careened over and foundered with her Admiral and "*twice four hundred men.*"

During the last few decades magnificent fleets of all types, including the more modern, have received the approval and inspection of the Sovereign; and a fleet has only just dispersed which, I suppose, has been the most up-to-date of all, to show the representatives of the Press of our world-wide Empire something of the navy which we feel belongs to us all.

But apart from our own ships, Spithead has been the gathering-place of warships of many nations.

Our King has been, and is, an Apostle of Peace ; he has travelled from Court to Court sowing not discord but goodwill, and, in consequence, the various nations have returned these visits in a friendly and kindly spirit. The French, the Japanese, the American, the Italian, the Spanish, the Swedish, and the Russian navies have all been represented.

A slender thread of kindness will sometimes do good, and I have endeavoured personally, by means of the Sailors' Rests, to make all welcome. The warmth with which these little kindnesses have been received, and the pleasure that they seem to have given to officers and men, has been a great cheer to me and to all my fellow-workers, and my bluejacket friends have also backed me up loyally.

We have had several visits from the Japanese, and have formed a friendship with their officers and men that I hope will not be broken ; and I believe that we shall in the future be somewhat closely connected with work among the men of the Japanese Navy.

In 1902, when the Japanese squadron lay at Spithead at the time of King Edward's coronation, we saw a good deal of the sailors at Portsmouth ; they came to the Sailors' Rest and were much pleased with it all. A Japanese clergyman was with us ; he used to visit the men on board their ships, circulating the Scriptures among them, and talking with them.

We put a room at his disposal at the Sailors' Rest, to which he invited them when ashore, and together they studied and talked over the Word of God. There were several Christians on board the warships. I understood that one of the Japanese admirals and three captains of battleships were Christians.

Admiral Gore Inguin was in command of the ships *Asama* and *Takasaga*, and he expressed a wish that a party of his men should see the Sailors' Rest, with a view to establishing a similar institution in Japan. I need not say that I was delighted to fall in with the proposition. So twenty Japanese sailors, with a warrant officer, came officially by the admiral's wish. We laid ourselves out for their enjoyment, and they appeared to be a very bright, merry party. After disposing of a good supper, they came upstairs to be received by Miss Wintz and myself. We spoke to them, and our words, being translated by the officer, seemed to please them greatly. Afterwards they went all over the Sailors' Rest, and stayed the night, sleeping in the cabins.

Meanwhile a great fleet had assembled at Spithead, such a sight as has never been seen; for fifteen miles those ships stretched in ranks at their moorings, all waiting to salute, and to do honour to their newly crowned King.

Foreign nations were also sending ships to swell the throng. Among them Japan, our new ally, was represented by two cruisers and a gunboat. Mighty ships represented France, Germany, the United States, Italy, Russia, Spain, Portugal; also ships of other classes represented Sweden, Chili, Argentine Republic, Netherlands, Greece.

I wrote to the captain of each ship, placing the Sailors' Rest at the disposal of the ship's company, and welcoming them among us; but, alas, in every case but the Japanese, after the terrible blow of the King's sudden illness had fallen, one by one the ships stole away.

The next day a letter came from the Senior Officer of the Staff H.I.M.S. *Asama* at Spithead :—

"DEAR MADAM,—*By your kind permission I enclose a cheque for five guineas, which is a humble present to the Royal Sailors' Rest from Rear-Admiral Gore Inguin of the Japanese squadron. This humble amount of money is purposed to be spent in any way which your authority thinks most appropriate.—Believe me, yours truly,*

"TAKASIU TAKASATA,

"*Senior Officer of Staff, Japanese Squadron.*"

This pleasant visit in 1902 was followed by another in 1906, when the Japanese warships *Katori* and *Kashima* arrived at Spithead, and afterwards came into Portsmouth harbour. The *Katori* was the first to arrive, and as soon as she was berthed alongside, my workers went on board, and with the kind help of the Commander-in-Chief, I arranged for the men to be marched up to the Sailors' Rest for a reception, at which we hoped to make them feel at home, and to cement the bond between us.

The next step was a visit which I was able to pay to the warship with Miss Wintz, by the consent and kind invitation of the commanding officer, Captain Sakomoto. We spent some time on board talking with the officers in the ward-room, giving booklets and our own publications, and talking with the men on the quarter-deck.

They were all mustered on the quarter-deck, and a very interesting sight it was. They listened most

attentively as I spoke to them, and all that I said was translated by an interpreter.

The official visits of the men to the Royal Sailors' Rests were very successful. We had the Rev. Mr. Warren of the C.M.S., a missionary from Japan, and Mr. Usichi, a Japanese gentleman staying with us, also Miss Ballard, a lady who had resided for many years in that country, and knew the language thoroughly.

After they had marched in, headed by the band of H.M.S. *Excellent,* and had taken their places, I gave them an address of welcome, which was translated by Mr. Warren. They listened attentively, often applauding. After that, a little party of sailors' children drilled on the platform with English and Japanese flags, and sang several pretty pieces, to the great delight of the audience.

The Rev. Mr. Warren and Miss Ballard spoke earnest and good words to them, and they adjourned to tea, which was greatly enjoyed. After tea, before they left, Miss Wintz and myself handed a Japanese New Testament to each man. They promised us to read them carefully, and we pray that they may follow the precepts taught in them. Whenever they came ashore we were on the spot to welcome them, and to show them such hospitality as we could, and we were richly rewarded by their gratitude.

An interesting fact came to light when I was on board the *Katori.* A Japanese booklet was presented to me, and I was told that it was a translation of one of my own books—"Under the Searchlight"—giving an account of the starting and working of our Sailors' Rests.

This book had come into the hands of the Japanese

Government, who ordered its translation, and placed a copy in the hands of every officer and seaman in the navy. This led to the starting of their own Sailors' Rests, of which they have five for the men of their own navy.

We found several devoted Christians in the Japanese ships, and several anxious to become Christians. There was one man, at least, who made a fresh start. He was a Japanese petty officer, and in his early days had been a hard drinker. He was engaged in the third blockading expedition at Port Arthur, and was wounded altogether twenty-four times.

Sent to hospital, he lay there in great suffering for weeks, hovering on the brink of the grave, but while lying on his bed of pain he came across Christians who taught about a God of love and a Saviour of sinners, and he quietly yielded himself to Christ.

After he left the hospital, cured, he was among the ship's company sent to England to bring out the battleship *Katori*. Mixing with heathen men who jeered at his Christianity, he gradually grew cold and dead; but, he said, as he sat in our hall and heard the words spoken, he saw how wrong he had been, and he joined us in prayer for forgiveness, confessing his sins, and thanking God very humbly for the renewed joy and peace with which his heart was filled.

Just before the ships sailed, a deputation of petty officers and men from each ship came to see me. They wished to present to myself and my workers some magnificent Japanese embroidery, which they said was a small token of all that they felt towards us, with the following letter written in Japanese, which I give verbatim :—

"DEAR MISS AGNES WESTON,—*All of us, the Japanese petty officers and seamen of His Imperial Majesty's ships 'Katori' and 'Kashima,' send out warm and deep thanks to you, the dear mother of our sailors, for your deep sympathy and kindness to our men, and for all that you have done for the British sailors for so many years.*

"Your love has been most self-sacrificing, and we humbly congratulate you upon your wonderful success. We have come to England, and we rejoice that we have looked upon our mother's face. We do hope that you will accept the embroidery that we send, which comes from our own country, and is the humble gift of every petty officer and seaman on board the Japanese warships 'Katori' and 'Kashima.' We sign ourselves, your true and devoted friends."

(Here follow the signatures of officers and men.)

I have lately received an interesting piece of news from Japan. When our Japanese friends were here, I felt how much I should like to be able to put something into their hands every month, like our *Ashore and Afloat*, to show them that they were not forgotten by their friends in England.

My kind and indefatigable friend, the Rev. Charles Warren, of Osaka, Japan, made a good suggestion, that I should pay for a thousand copies of a magazine called the *Light of the World*, which would be a special edition to the Japanese Navy. He says:—

"I am glad to be able to tell you that the first instalment of your gift of 1000 copies of the *Light of the World* has gone out this month to the different naval ports. I have heard to-day from my workers at Kure

that they had arrived safely, and that it would give them the greatest pleasure to attend to the distribution. I enclose you a specimen copy. On the front page I have given an account of your life and work, condensed, of course, but I think that the chief points are mentioned.

"On each of the 1000 copies is printed the Japanese equivalent of '*A Gift from Miss Weston.*' I will let you know as soon as I get any further news."

I shall be rejoiced indeed if these papers are received by the Japanese bluejackets in the spirit in which they are sent. If I find that they are liked, I will distribute them in the Japanese navy at intervals, or perhaps once a month.

I am still further cheered and encouraged by a warm letter of thanks from the Japanese Warrant-Officers from Kure. I hear that my name has considerable influence with them. At Kure a large number of copies are distributed in the naval hospital, twenty copies to the Warrant-Officers' Club, twenty copies to a Christian Lieutenant, Captain of a submarine, who is delighted to distribute them to his men, and twenty copies to a Japanese lady who has started a Christian Home for bluejackets on a small scale, and which already has outgrown the house in which she started.

This lady will, I believe, do a great spiritual work among the Japanese man-o'-war's men; she seems specially adapted for it. I hope to continue in close touch with her, and to be able to cheer and encourage her.

We were really sorry when the Japanese ships left us. We have been associated with several Royal,

National, and Imperial Navies—the French, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Swedish, Russian, and American—and have friends in all, so that our work is assuming an international and imperial character, and, what is better still, several of these countries have started Sailors' Rests, copying more or less our Homes at Devonport and Portsmouth.

Admiral Prince Henry of Prussia, speaking of our Sailors' Rests and work in the navy, said, after a few kind words of praise, "*In my opinion this is a truly Imperial work.*"

The far East has occupied our attention, but other ships of war representing countries nearer at hand have visited us at Portsmouth and at Devonport.

The visit of the German fleet to Plymouth in 1904 was a most interesting event; all international courtesies and amenities are useful, and forge links in the chain that binds nations together. As soon as I heard of the visit of the German warships, I wrote to Admiral Sir Edward Seymour, the Commander-in-Chief at Devonport, telling him that we should be glad to take our share in the welcome, and suggesting to him that, as an act of national hospitality, we should like the men of the fleet to be our guests while they remained in the Sound.

This invitation met with the cordial approval of Sir Edward, who promised to send my note of invitation to the German Commander-in-Chief as soon as the ships arrived. Amidst salutings on each side the big warships moored; and among the signals one was hoisted in the fleet by Admiral Von Koester to the effect that, "*Miss Weston cordially invited the men of the fleet to make the Royal Sailors' Rest their home*

when ashore." And I can truly say that the invitation was responded to ; we were crowded out with the burly figures and bright smiling faces of the Teuton bluejackets, sober, gentlemanly, delighted with all they saw, and astonished, even after the invitation, at having nothing to pay.

Outside we were bright with bunting and with the German national flags. We were as busy as bees. Music, singing, chattering, expressions of goodwill were heard all round.

They quite understood that ours was a temperance house, and expressed their pleasure that it was so ; they were lost in admiration at its size, and at all the arrangements for comfort ; and it was a still greater astonishment to them to realise that it was the work of two ladies. They seized me by the hand and indulged in a succession of " Hochs " that verily rent the roof. We gave away our own literature and a quantity of German Gospels as souvenirs.

On the last day of the visit of the fleet they flooded us out to such an extent that no food was left ; we searched the town for cake, buns, and bread, and requisitioned every bit, but still there was not enough. Miss Wintz, who speaks German, called a halt, and told the crowding men that we were run out of supplies, and would they go for a walk for a little while until we could lay in a fresh stock ?

They took it very kindly, and to bridge the time over we got up a concert in our hall, which was hastily cleared of chairs, and filled with men, our band played, and a party of young men volunteers gave them some part songs.

I felt that I had an opportunity now to say a few

words of friendship and goodwill which possibly might not be forgotten. My German was altogether too rusty, but a fine young German sailor stood by my side, and as I spoke he translated my words.

They listened most attentively, and then a German petty officer proposed a vote of thanks. He said that "When they saw the signal they all felt the kindness and friendliness which it implied. They thought it was very brave of a lady to invite the whole fleet, but they had accepted the invitation, and hundreds and hundreds of German sailors would never forget the Royal Sailors' Rest, Devonport, and the kind friends there.

"More than that, the news would spread all through Germany, as every man had written and sent a picture post-card from the Rest to fathers and mothers, wives and sweethearts, saying how, far away from the Fatherland, they had found a real home." He concluded by calling upon all to give hearty cheers; after this we sang the "*Watch on the Rhine*," the German National Anthem, and the British National Anthem, and bade each other good-bye.

The fleet weighed anchor at five o'clock the next morning. I in my turn have received picture post-cards, and here is one: "*Briefkarte. Kindest regards from two German brothers, who will never forget the welcome that you gave them at Plymouth.*—R. BERGER, EDWARD STAAL."

Truth, however, compels me to say that some of our British blues were jealous. "Why should Miss Weston receive the Germans, and be so kind to them?" questioned some stalwart seamen gunners. It was explained to them that it was done to make

them welcome, and to return in some measure the kindness shown to them by the German sailors at Kiel. "Well, suppose it's all right; but we don't like to be turned out of our Sailors' Rest for them."

I must, however, tell a story of one of our men, who was every inch a bluejacket, and a gentleman. He had just taken and paid for a ticket for a cabin, and he had secured the last. A German petty officer came up, and asked for a cabin, and was told that the last was gone.

Disappointed, he was turning away, when our British seaman stepped up, and courteously handed him his own ticket. The German was profuse in his thanks; and when the remark was made to the kind donor that he would probably have to be content with a shake-down on the floor, he replied, "It is the least that I could do; these men are our guests."

We had a very interesting visit from our German friends a year or two ago—November 1907—at Portsmouth, when the Kaiser and Kaiserin visited our King and Queen at Windsor.

The ships included the Imperial yacht *Hohenzollern*, the cruiser *Scharnhorst*, and the despatch-boat *Sleipner*. I wrote to the Kaiser, asking his kind interest in our work among his men, and telling him that we hoped to make the Royal Sailors' Rest a home for them, and to give a banquet on some fitting day.

Although the visit of the squadron was very short, all this was arranged by the Kaiser's kind interest. My workers had free access to the ships, and we distributed about 1000 German Testaments and

Gospels, and a large number of picture German text-cards. The men received them with great delight as souvenirs, and we could have distributed many more if we had had them.

The day was fine when the men were marched up to the Royal Sailors' Rest to enjoy our hospitality. The tables looked very bright and pretty, and we had a number of our own bluejackets waiting to fraternise with their foreign chums, which they did right well. I gave them a short address of welcome, which was translated into German by an officer of the *Hohenzollern*, and was received with loud "Hochs." The banquet was thoroughly enjoyed, and was followed by a nice entertainment.

By the Kaiser's direct orders, Admiral Ingenohl, Commandant of the Imperial yacht *Hohenzollern*, came to call upon me, and the kind feeling shown is expressed in a letter which I received from him a day or two afterwards, of which I give a translation of a portion :—

"I desire to offer you my most hearty thanks for your very kind letter and the book which accompanied it, and I greatly deplore that I cannot express myself in your language, as my knowledge of it does not extend so far. I wish to assure you that what I had already heard of you and your blest work, and further what I saw during my visit to your Home, the Sailors' Rest, has made a deep impression on me. This impression has been further deepened by the perusal of the book, 'Our Bluejackets,' by Miss Wintz. May your example find many followers in England and in Germany.—With deep respect, yours most truly,

"INGENOHL, *Rear-Admiral.*"

We bade adieu to our German friends with regret, and hope to see them again.

Italian and Spanish ships have visited us at Portsmouth and Devonport. We have always received free permission to go on board these ships, and I have given "At Homes" at the Sailors' Rests to the men, and I hope always to be able to do this.

Our American friends are very specially welcome, and as they receive *Ashore and Afloat* and my *Monthly Letters* every month, there is a close link between us, as well as the strong international feeling which binds the White Ensign and the Stars and Stripes together.

While this fleet was in Portsmouth we had a very bright and happy time. I telegraphed to Admiral Cotton, as the squadron lay at Kiel, and invited 400 men to a reception at the Royal Sailors' Rest, Portsmouth. The invitation was accepted cordially by the Admiral. On the day appointed the fine body of men marched up, the streets were lined with people, and the Sailors' Rest was dressed with bunting, the Stars and Stripes being conspicuous.

We had the pleasure of receiving them, while the band played Sousa's march, "*Stars and Stripes.*" We had speaking, glee-singing, recitations; then refreshments were served, and we finally bade each other good-bye, after singing, with linked hands, "*Auld Lang Syne.*" As they marched out, after three hearty cheers, the band played "*Hail, Columbia.*"

My workers went on board the ships *Kearsage*, *Chicago*, *San Francisco*, and *Malchias* every day while they lay in Portsmouth Harbour, making friends with the men, influencing them for good, distributing

Testaments and books. They took nearly a hundred pledges, and the demand for the Sailors' Testaments published by the Scripture Gift Mission was so great that our stock was exhausted.

Just before the ships sailed, one of my workers held a Bible-class on board the *Chicago*, and the apprentices of the *San Francisco* sent me ten shillings out of their wages towards our building fund. We bade our American cousins good-bye with real sorrow.

The American fleet departed, and we went on with our ordinary work, but after a time our lively friends and next-door neighbours, the French, desired to visit this country. They paid two visits at different dates, but the largest fleet came to Portsmouth in 1905. Our bluejackets were very excited about what they called the "*Tenty cordial.*"

The arrival of the fleet in English waters was not to be forgotten; thousands of people lined the three miles of Southsea beach; a few trailers of smoke in the sky showed that our visitors were coming, then the fighting-tops emerged, and at last the ships themselves, moving majestically on. No sooner were they in British waters than a spurt of flame and cloud of smoke was followed by the thunders of the whole fleet saluting the French Republic and Majesty of Great Britain, and they passed on to pick up their moorings off Cowes.

After a day or so the fleet got under way, and this time the destination was Portsmouth. As is well known, the entrance to the harbour is very narrow, so the ships came on in single file, the *Massèna*, flagship, leading. Here again the shore was black with cheering spectators, and the massed

bands crashed out the "*Marseillaise.*" Curiously enough, one of the first to receive them was Nelson's flagship, H.M.S. *Victory.* She was dressed with colours, but there she lay as the ships passed—many a Frenchman raised his cap to the old ship, once the enemy, now the friend, of his country. About that moment a string of colours fluttered from the French flagship, which read that "*Miss Weston would be delighted to welcome any French sailors that liked to come to the Royal Sailors' Rest.*" This signal was made at my request by the courtesy of the French admiral.

And the signal did its work—the bluejackets came to us in hundreds. We had turned our large hall into a salon and café, little tables about, plenty of refreshments and temperance drinks; the Tricolour was conspicuously placed, and the hall was gaily decorated. Two large mottoes occupied each end: "*Bienvenue à la Flotte Française,*" and "*Vive l'Entente Cordiale,*" and here we received our guests, and they made themselves entirely at home. Songs were given, and recitations, by English and French sailors, and also by ladies who kindly volunteered their services; also feats of swordsmanship by Lieutenant and Mrs. Barrett.

Our friends' appetites were considerable; they consumed 34,765 rolls, cakes, and tarts, 5061 eggs, 2771 bottles of temperance drinks—which they observed were "very good, with no headaches in them"—also 20 sides of bacon, and 120 joints of beef and mutton.

My workers visited the ships, and were allowed to give away our souvenir books, of which we issued

15,000 on board and ashore. Crowds of men rushed for them, and said that they should read them, and send them home to their wives and mothers.

The *Daily Mail* remarked: "The French and British paraded the streets arm-in-arm like sworn brothers. If their gait was not always steady, you may set it down to hospitality, which the occasion excused. And really there were remarkably few evidences of excess. Proof of this might be found at the Sailors' Rest, where Miss Weston is the good angel who shelters those who have succumbed to the temptation of the moment."

"We have had no cases of drunkenness," was the statement of our interpreter. "A few men were sent to their ships in cabs, but it was not necessary to detain any. Hundreds of French sailors have visited the Home and have spent hours here. They are amazed and delighted with the warmth of their welcome. Many have never before set foot in England, and believed that the British were a cold and difficult people. Not a few imagined that English women were as the French caricaturist often depicts them. They have denounced the caricature, and are filled with remorse and admiration."

Our happiest day was Sunday. We had announced a religious service in the afternoon, and had invited them to come, but we did not expect the 600 that crowded in. We sang hymns in French and English simultaneously. The British blues gave sacred solos and choruses. I spoke to them, and they listened most attentively; the words came from my heart, and I hope went to theirs. We parted later in the

day, after a hearty vote of thanks had been proposed by a French chief petty officer, and enthusiastically carried by all present. We did thank God that we had been able to take our small part in furthering *l'entente cordiale*.

Space will not admit of my chronicling the visits of several other foreign fleets, but I must say something about a navy that has loomed large before us during the war in the East—I mean the Russian navy.

Early in 1909 a Russian fleet appeared on the horizon. I watched them as they passed the Nab Light and steamed slowly through Spithead to the harbour, where they took up their moorings. The entertaining of 500 Russian officers, seamen, and marines at the Royal Sailors' Rest, Portsmouth, was a very pleasant event.

It was a fine sight to see them march up, headed by the band. They filed into our hall, and soon took their places at the tables, where an appetising spread awaited them. In my unavoidable absence, Miss Wintz welcomed them in the names of ourselves and all our workers. The address was translated into Russian by an officer of one of the ships, and was received with great pleasure by the audience.

After the banquet we had a concert, exhibitions of drill were given by the Royal Naval Cadet Corps, together with fencing and athletic displays by men of the Royal Marine Artillery. The Russians thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and took much interest in the drill displays, the sword exercises, and the musical marching by the girls, while they applauded every item in the programme. A party

of British sailors was present to fraternise with the guests, and in every way the concert went off remarkably well.

Our reception took place on Thursday, and on the Saturday, the day on which the squadron left, I received a signal from the Admiral commanding, asking if a deputation from H.I.M.S. *Cesarevitch* could be received. We were, of course, only too pleased to receive them, little imagining their kind thoughts to us.

The *Evening News* says: "The deputation—three fine stalwart specimens of the Czar's Slav subjects—were accompanied by an officer to present them and to act as interpreter. This he did in a charming manner, bowing very low and kissing hands. He desired first to thank Miss Weston for receiving the representatives of the crews, who had come at the instigation of the men of the fleet to convey the unanimous appreciation of the whole fleet for the hospitable reception of over 500 of them in the beautiful hall at the Royal Sailors' Rest, and to ask her acceptance of a small gift as a lasting memento of the hearty friendship the occasion had engendered.

"One of the trio (an electrician) then presented, with much profound salutation, a handsome silver-gilt vase inscribed with these words:—

IN MEMORY OF

THE KIND RECEPTION AT THE ROYAL SAILORS' REST

FROM

THE GRATEFUL CREW OF

T.R.S. *CESAREVITCH*

"The deputation made a complete tour of the institution, and expressed again and again their amazement at the vastness, the resources, the cleanliness, and the organisation of the huge establishment."

We were all very much touched by the kindness of our Russian friends, and still more so when we ascertained that the gift not only came from the lower-deck of the *Cesarevitch*, but also from the lower-deck men of the other ships of the squadron, and that it had been quite their own thought, and not in any way prompted by the officers.

The next day we watched the *Cesarevitch*, *Slava*, *Olag*, *Bogatyr*, and *Admiral Makaroff*, steam majestically away from Spithead until they were well down in the horizon. Many good wishes followed them, and earnest prayer that the 500 copies of Russian Scriptures scattered through that fleet might be good seed which in God's time would bring forth fruit in hearts and lives.

It is remarkable to see how this international work has opened up, and I hope in the future we shall be able to continue and perhaps enlarge it in various ways. As in the case of Japan, one can never tell whereunto this sort of work may grow; we can but sow the seed, and leave the result to a Higher Power.

CHAPTER XXV

THE FAMOUS SIGNAL

AMIDST all the modern scientific navy there is a ship at Portsmouth useless for fighting purposes, but invaluable for the lessons she teaches, and for the history and poetry that surrounds her—I mean, of course, Nelson's old flagship, H.M.S. *Victory*. Thousands of visitors crowd to see her year by year. When I pointed her out to the Japanese seamen from the deck of the *Kasuga*, they prostrated themselves in reverence. And years ago, when I was allowed to hold a meeting for the signal lads, in Nelson's cabin on board the grand old ship, I felt an irresistible influence—magnetic, one might almost call it—which seemed to possess me.

On the 21st of October last I went down to the dockyard to refresh my eyes and my heart with the sight of the famous signal flying from the ship, the same signal hoisted at the main, fore, and mizzen, that flew on the first Trafalgar Day ; while the garland aloft commemorated the death of the gallant admiral. I felt that that signal had a message for me, not only from my country, but from the Sovereign Ruler of the world.

An old pensioner, with his sailor son and grandsons, feebly climbed the companion, and looking at

the signal, about which he waxed eloquent to the youngsters, crept to the inscription on the quarter-deck, and, baring his head, placed his wreath over the words, "*Here Nelson fell.*" The little scene spoke to my heart and speaks now, as does the signal.

There is One who has taught us that our duty is the duty of love, "*By love serve*"—and the evolvement of love, if we are Christians at all, must blossom out in our lives. I have found all through my life's experience that while ways and methods change, and, we trust, improve, as years roll on, the root principle, "*love,*" never changes, but "*abideth for ever.*"

It crops up every day in hundreds of ways—in letters from relatives and friends all over the country, asking me to tell them of the whereabouts of the relatives from whom they have not heard; letters from men in all our colonies, and in foreign lands, recalling old times in the service, and breathing love and affection; letters from mothers on all kinds of subjects connected with their sons. And last, and not least—showing, I suppose, the greatest confidence of all—letters from men asking me to choose wives for them from among the many girls well known to me, feeling sure that as I have helped them on so far, I will help them in this most important step of all.

And so my work is, to say the least, varied, and the spirit of love, and, I hope, common sense, runs through it like a thread of gold.

I am so thankful to see that there seems no cessation in our onward course under the new regulations. The navy, as far as organisation is concerned, has entirely changed, and the system of working our two great Societies, the R.N.T.S. and R.N.C.U., has had

to be rearranged to follow the changes in the service. By the help of an earnest naval officer this reorganisation has been, and is being carried out, with excellent results.

A great deal of work, which I hope will increase in the future, is opening out at Chatham. We have a capital wives' branch of the R.N.T.S., and both our naval men and their wives are doing right well. All this indicates life and virility; and the work of the bluejacket is splendid, not only at the ports, but on board ship, and all over the world.

It seems strange, but it is true sometimes, that just a word or a sentence spoken will go on sounding in the heart of another when we have forgotten all about it.

One of my bluejacket friends on a shooting expedition once got lost in a jungle, and separated from his companions. He wandered for hours, and then found himself at the spot from which he started. Night came on; his matches had been spoiled from jumping into the water to help pull the boat ashore, he could not light a fire or smoke, and as he camped on the ground he heard the low growling of wild beasts in the jungle.

His rifle lay beside him at full cock. But suppose a beast of prey leaped upon him from the rear? The thought sent a cold trickle of icy water down his spine. "All at once," he said afterwards, "the Sailors' Rest seemed to stand before me, and I heard your voice saying '*Always trust God*'—only three words, but it was enough. I committed myself to Him, and although the wild beasts came near me they never touched me. After a time, resting on

these words like a pillow, I fell asleep, and was roused by a loud halloo at dawn.

"'Here you are then, Jim; we've found you.' And all danger was past. Can you wonder that I've decided to trust God about everything?"

This sounds strange. What is it? Memory? Telepathy? What? God used some of His natural laws to convey a message to that man's inner consciousness, a telegram to his spirit. The storehouse of memory is wonderful, and I am sure that this true story will cheer any worker who may be reading it.

One of the incidents in Nelson's life, well known to all, has often been a help to me. In one of the naval battles, it will be remembered, he was anxious to press the fight to a conclusion, and was ranging alongside his enemy's ship to rake her fore and aft, when the Commander-in-Chief hoisted the signal, "*Cease firing.*" This was reported to him by his signal lieutenant. Nelson put his telescope to his blind eye, and, gazing for a moment, he called out, "I see no signal; down with the helm and give her a broadside."

As I look back I can remember when many friends more fitted to judge than I could be, hoisted the signal to "*Cease firing*"—worldly people who did not care to associate with me, unless I gave up an eccentric life, and conformed more to the habits of society; Christian people, who disapproved of my methods of conducting the work, and who wished it done in their own way; some who desired to stop all entertainments and recreations, to put away all games, and to hoist the piano out of the window.

Others wished all religious work of every kind stopped as uncongenial and morose. Others, again, ran a tilt against the conducting of the Sailors' Rests on temperance lines, and others wished me to hand over the money given to me to spend for the good of bluejackets to the bluejackets themselves, who, "of course, knew better than any one else what they liked."

All these were orders in various ways to "*Cease firing*," but I have always put the telescope to my blind eye, and have gone ahead, and the result has been certainly beyond my expectations.

The fable of Æsop, of the old man and his ass, is often enacted in real life with the same result, that no one is pleased, and the ass is lost into the bargain.

I do not presume to think that my way of working is the best, but as I look back over my life I can say with all humility that I feel that I have been led on step by step by God, otherwise I could have done nothing; and feeling sure of this, I take my orders from the great Commander-in-Chief above. I hope that I am ready to take advice from any one, but whether that advice would be acted upon I cannot say.

I am surrounded and supported by a splendid body of Trustees. I have a staff of workers, ladies and others, second to none; we are all of one heart and of one soul, and we know how "*to haul upon one rope.*"

The Holy Book, which reveals to us the personal Saviour and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, is the foundation, and, as the late Empress Frederick remarked to me, "*the crown of our work.*"

Our Sailors' Rests are wonderful witnesses to the faithfulness of God, in so far that He made two very simple women strong to overcome all difficulties, monetary and otherwise, and enabled us to start and to carry on this work, ashore and afloat, for so many years.

I did not leave my home and give my means and all else to make the Sailors' Rests into clubs, but my desire has been to give them Christian homes, where they could come when ashore for refreshment for body, soul, and spirit—for I take it that every man is composed of these essential parts —and in these homes that they should have freedom to come and to go ; food for the body in abundance; teaching for the mind and morals, through books, lectures, lanterns, discussions, and all else that can be thought of ; and last, but not least, spiritual help and teaching in the simple presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, Pilot and Captain, through life to eternity.

After forty years' work among the bluejackets of the Royal Navy I feel, as I look back on the voyage behind, and forward into the glow of the western sun, that God's Hand has been on the tiller. The little seed of the past has grown into the great tree of the present, and its influence extends all over the world. A sober navy is a National Insurance. Given sobriety and there is nothing that the British bluejacket will not do or dare.

The *Royal Naval Temperance Society*, the uphill work of so many years, is under the direct patronage of the Lords of the Admiralty, and numbers among its patrons H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, Admiral Sir

John Fisher, Admiral the Hon. A. G. Curzon-Howe, Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, Admiral Sir Charles Drury, Admiral H.S.H. Prince Louis of Battenberg, and other distinguished officers. Its president is Admiral G. F. King Hall, C.V.O.

This Society and the *Royal Naval Christian Union*, hand in hand, and numbering some 25,000 members scattered all over the world, have their headquarters at the Royal Sailors' Rests. I provide all the funds and generally superintend the work. The number of packets and parcels of literature, including the monthly issue of *Ashore and Afloat* and *Monthly Letters*, amount to 225,236, a large number to send out during the year ; these go to ships and sailors all over the world, and are read with pleasure, and I hope with profit ; the weight of this large output of reading matter amounts to 40 tons, 10 cwt. every year.

The Royal Sailors' Rests—so well known at Devonport and Portsmouth—have over 1400 beds between them. The grand totals of men sleeping on these premises last year reached the following remarkable figures — 352,384. These figures show the popularity of the Sailors' Rests without further remarks. There seems a growing tendency nowadays to start sailors' homes and clubs with a drinking bar, on the ground that if intoxicating drink is not supplied that men will not come.

The figures that we give prove this to be an utter fallacy. Homes without strong drink can, by proper management, be made much more popular than homes with drink, and surely if this is the case, what

can be the need to add another public-house to the numbers already existing.

If our Royal Sailors' Rests have done nothing else, they demonstrate clearly that the bluejacket of the twentieth century does not need the attractions of strong drink; and, indeed, men constantly say how glad they are that such things are excluded from our homes.

Christmas 1908 was a happy time to me. Letters from all parts of the world poured in, with flowers and illuminated addresses from my naval friends and their wives. But first and foremost I was honoured by a letter from His Majesty the King, which he was graciously pleased to send me. It was quite unexpected, and therefore all the more valuable. The portrait spoken of by His Majesty duly arrived, with the Royal signature affixed. The King is in the uniform of a British admiral, and it is a speaking likeness.

I need not say how highly it will be treasured, with the letter that accompanied it, which I am sure that I have His Majesty's permission to give.

The letter is written by command of the King:—

"SANDRINGHAM, *23rd December* 1908.

"*From* GENERAL SIR DIGHTON PROBYN.
To MISS AGNES WESTON,
Royal Sailors' Rest, Portsmouth.

"DEAR MADAM,—*I write by command of the King to send you His Majesty's best thanks for your letter, and for the Report and copy of your book which accompanied it.*

"*The King further commands me to say that nobody*

is better aware of, nor more thoroughly appreciates, the great work you have done for the British sailor, and for their wives and children also, than His Majesty is, and he thanks you sincerely for the same.

"I am by the King's command sending you a signed photograph of His Majesty, which he wishes you to accept as a small token of his gratitude to you for your noble services. I am to add at the same time His Majesty's fervent hope that you may yet long be spared to your country to carry on this great work to which you have given so many years of your life.—I remain, dear madam, yours faithfully,

"D. M. PROBYN,
General,
Keeper of His Majesty's Privy Purse."

This letter, I need not say, was Christmas cheer, and I was glad indeed that the work that had been done has merited, and has received, the unstinted approval of my sovereign.

The King's letter was followed by a sweet and gracious letter, which I treasure much, from the Queen, and which I am sure I may venture to give :—

"SANDRINGHAM, NORFOLK,
"*27th December* 1908.

"DEAR MISS WESTON,—*I have had the pleasure of submitting your letter and enclosures to the Queen, and am commanded by Her Majesty to thank you very much for so kindly keeping her in touch with the interesting and invaluable work that you have carried on for so many years with such wonder-*

ful results among the British sailors, their wives, and families.

"That God may bless and prosper these endeavours for many a new year is the Queen's most earnest wish and prayer.—Believe me, yours very truly,

"CHARLOTTE KNOLLYS."

We little thought that the days of Edward the Peacemaker were drawing to a close, but so it was. On 6th May 1910 the minute guns and the tolling bells told the nation that another reign had come to an end, and King George V., the Sailor King, of whom the Navy will always be proud, succeeded his father.

The "French Maid," the old public-house of which I spoke in a previous chapter, had been pulled down, and a splendid block of buildings, containing 200 cabins, warmed by radiators, and lighted by electricity, stood upon its site, the ground floor being occupied by a spacious billiard-room ; this building was opened a few days before the death of King Edward, by Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, and he delighted the men by playing the first stroke on one of the billiard tables. In his breezy way, he said how well he had known the work, for more years than he cared to remember, and what he felt about it, as to its influence for good on the Navy. My memory of Lord Charles goes back to the time when he was flag-lieutenant to Admiral Sir Harry Keppel, who was Commander-in-Chief at Devonport, when we first commenced our work in 1873. He has been a kind and constant friend ever since.

The time has run on, King George and Queen Mary have willingly become patrons of the work, and have honoured me with many kindnesses. The coronation year was a year of hard work and surpassing interest; there was to be a coronation review at Spithead, and every nation having a navy was to be represented. What an opportunity for international work. Early in the year a letter arrived from the British and Foreign Bible Society, in which the secretary said that the great desire of their committee was to place a copy of the New Testament, in his own language, in the hands of every seaman present at the review; they would provide the Testaments, could we organise and carry out the work?

It was a "tall order," as our American cousins say, and in many cases, with so many nationalities and various religions, very difficult, but I promised that we would do our best. Captain Key, R.N., Admiral Horsley, and many kind friends at Southsea, came to our help. The Testaments were prettily packed with illuminated cards, &c., and tied up with tri-coloured ribbons. The warships belonged to France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Greece, America, Chile, Argentine, Japan, China, Spain, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Russia, and Turkey. They took up their moorings at Spithead and down the Solent.

I wrote to every commanding officer, telling him of our wish to present each man with a New Testament, and of our intention, with his permission, to come out in steam launches to do it on Friday, 23rd June, the day before the Naval Review. To our

surprise and pleasure, every captain wrote saying that he should be very glad to receive us, and to give us every facility. At 9.30 on the Friday morning, a party of ladies and gentlemen, numbering about eighty, assembled on the pontoon, alongside of which lay the steam launches, their red flags, with "Royal Sailors' Rest" in white letters, fluttering in the breeze. The weather had been very stormy, but during the cruise of the Bible launches the waves sank to rest. Raising his hat, Captain Key commended the work and the workers to Him whose holy Book they were going to give away as a coronation gift.

Meanwhile, the volumes, nearly 10,000, were stowed on board, carefully assorted, and the boats, under the command of Captain Key and Lieutenant Porch, R.N., started on their cruise. Their success was wonderful. On board the Chinese cruiser, *Hai-Chi*, the men were all mustered, the Rev. W. Collum spoke to them in their own language, told them of the gift, and asked them to accept and read it. Every man was eager to have one, and the officers quite declined to be left out in the cold. We had with us gentlemen, most of whom had come from London, and who could between them speak all the languages represented by the ships. The Turkish officers and men gladly accepted the gifts, as did the Spaniards, Austrians, Greeks, and all others; very tired, but very happy, the little ship's companies returned, their cargo all expended.

We threw the Sailors' Rest open to all our foreign guests, and it was thronged by day and by night. Our large hall made a capital café chantant by day and bivouac by night; every classroom was turned

into temporary sleeping quarters, and every cabin and bed was full: nearly 10,000 men slept under our roof at that time, and our housekeeping bill for the few days that the festivities lasted was pretty considerable. Eggs, 16,350; tea, coffee, and cocoa, 23,282 cups; cakes and pastries, 21,465; sausages, 5,163; rolls, 10,128. But the crowning day was undoubtedly Sunday, 25th June; there were not far short of 1000 men in our hall, and we had a sacred concert, interspersed with solos. A Norwegian sang us a hymn in his own language, and his shipmates took up the chorus. Two young Danish sailors and a French sailor did the same, and a Dutch warrant officer sang the "*Glory Song*" in Dutch; but the most striking moment was when the British blue-jackets, some 400, led off "*All people that on earth do dwell.*" All rose, and the foreigners sang the tune if they did not know the words, Japanese, Chinese, Turks, Greeks, Russians, &c., all joining. It was a sight never to be forgotten; as I looked upon them, the words, "*One God and Father of all,*" shone before me.

We made great friends with our visitors; booklets, text cards, and other souvenirs were heartily received. Some Chinese and Japanese officers were Christians, and joined our Royal Naval Christian Union, others joined the Royal Naval Temperance Society. Work is growing in the Japanese, Chinese, Norwegian, and other navies. Some 10,000 copies of a paper called *The Light of the World*, with its naval supplement, are circulated in the Japanese navy every month, our *Ashore and Afloat* for Japan.

The Italian and German Admiralties have each

endowed a cabin in the Sailors' Rest, as a souvenir of the visit, and our Japanese friends have been only too kind to us. A beautiful bronze bowl was brought by the flag-lieutenant from the *Kurama*, as a present from the Admiral, officers, and ship's company; it was ornamented by tortoises in high relief. "Is there anything symbolical in the tortoise?" I asked. "Yes," replied the young officer, "tortoises are supposed to live for two hundred years, and we all hope that you will do the same, to care for us and help us." Needless to say that the wish for such a long existence was not re-echoed by myself, although I trust that I may live long enough to do a great deal more for our Japanese brothers of the sea, for other foreign nations, and for our own brave men.

Although a great many years of my life have passed away I am active and strong, and I look forward to years of good service, and I shall rejoice in developments of any kind. I have no idea of giving up the work that I love so well, and retiring into a life of leisure and ease.

When I die I should like to die in harness, and to keep my flag flying to the last—that is, of course, always supposing that sufficient mental and bodily health and strength are given me.

I realise every day more and more that it is only as God works through us that we can do anything; and as I look back over my past life I see that since 1876, when the Holy Spirit taught me the great truth of the indwelling of Christ, that success has crowned this work in an unparalleled manner; the failures and mistakes have been mine, and the glory is God's.

I rejoice that I live among my own people. Our men, their wives and children, are around me; their interests are my interests, and their best welfare my aim and my prayer. I have seen the girls and boys of our Guild and Brigade grow up and settle into homes of their own, in their turn bringing their little ones for me to see and admire.

A tall, bearded, non-commissioned officer in the Royal Marines came up to speak to me at Devonport not long ago. "Do you know," he said, "that you once took me in your arms? My mother brought me up when I was a baby; she never forgot it, and how you said that you hoped that I should grow up to be a help and comfort to her." I looked at my herculean friend, and felt glad that he could tell me such a story.

Can you wonder after reading these simple annals of my life among our bluejackets that I wish nothing better than to live and die in such happy service, and that the advice of a nautical friend will, I hope, be acted upon—"*As long as you have any sea-legs left keep the bridge.*" Of my past life I can truly say, "GOD'S HAND HAS BEEN UPON THE TILLER."

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